It’s a Trap!

“‘Ain't never seen a squirrel like this before”

As Dale trotted up on his bay gelding to see what Tim was talking about, he noticed a black,   
  
slightly furry body stuck in their trap. He dismounted and slowly walked toward where Tim was

standing.

“As long as it’s good eatin’, I don’t rightly car---”. Dale was cut off by the oddest sound that he

had ever heard. It was somewhere between a growl and a loud groan.

Dale and Tim immediately dropped to the ground, their stomachs sinking into the swampy mud.

They kept their distance, trying to put the long, patchy grass in between them and this “squirrel”.

Still prone on the ground, Dale lifted his head and peered above the grass. There, laying in the

center of the cage was the most grotesque creature that he had ever seen. Its hair grew in short,

rough patches that looked as if it had been yanked out in several spots. The long thin tail

resembled that of a rat, that is, if rats had black tails with a spike on the end.

“Dale” Tim whispered. “Look at them bones. There goes our dinner. Ma’s goin’ to be cross when

she finds out”

Dale’s eyes darted to the floor of the cage where a multitude of small bones littered the ground.

“Well, now we knows what he eats” Dale retorted.

As the crushing realization of their grumbling stomachs sinks in, Tim reached for a nearby

mangrove branch.

“What’re ya think you’re goin’ to do with that? I’ve a bad feelin’ about this” Said Dale as he sank

back into the grass.

Dale straightened his shoulder and replied “I’ma gon’ poke that thing; might be a ‘coon. My

cousin Hank caught a huge ‘coon around these parts last spring. He swore it had pure white fur

and blood-red eyes.”

Tim didn’t see the point in arguing at the moment. Normally, he would’ve told Dale that his cousin

had spent too much time hunting alone in the bayou. He might have even interjected that Hank

had eaten “one too many bad crawdads”, but now wasn’t the time for playing around. He knew

that this was no racoon

As Tim reached out and the wispy branch slid through the side bars of the cage, Dale shouted

“Don’t!”. It was too late. The stick poked the black….. racoon…. and it immediately woke up and

stared. Its red eyes seemed to pierce their souls and both of them froze in place, unable to move

in fear. This creature was so small, yet neither could move out of an unexplained sheer terror.

“Ah, I see that you mortals never learn” The racoon stated. “I’ve seen your kind roam this earth

for thousands upon thousands of years and curiosity always seems to bring about your downfall”

Dale and Tim were still frozen in place. Tim started to whimper slightly and Dale began to

uncontrollably shake. Both of them realized that they should have believed those tales that

Gramps told them when they were little. How were they to realize that they were more than an

old man’s stories?

“Well, i’ve been needing some fresh souls and your young ones will do nicely.”

Suddenly, everything went dark for the two boys. As their minds slipped into the dark,

unfathomable oblivion, they simultaneously realized that neither of them would ever have to

muck another stall for the end of eternity.