

Carrie was counting the money after Mr. Butler's office closed. The quiet of the building was somewhat chilling, just as the events of the day were frantic. Hours earlier, watching from another room, Carrie witnessed an argument between her father and Mr. Butler. Her father, Hallie Lacey, had warned the White man to stop making suggestive remarks to his daughter. Butler, whose attitude toward Blacks typified the mindset of many southerners in the United States during the 1930s, told Mr. Lacey that he was lucky he didn't take advantage of her, since she had been sending messages in the way she dressed while working for him.

"You need to leave me 'lone," Carrie had told Mr. Butler, as he walked toward her. The only light in the tiny room came from the moon in its half phase.

"You not gonna do anythang 'cause people been noticin' how you dress when you come in here," Mr. Butler had whispered. "Dey know you been here all times of night, and 'dey done seen you wit' me when I be gamblin'. Ain't nobody gonna know wha' I did cuz you cain't tell. Now you might as well go on 'head an' take off yo' clothes if you don' want me to tear 'em off you."

Carrie realized she was in no position to ward off Mr. Butler's advances. She was only fifteen. Many townspeople already gossiped about her father's wisdom in allowing her to work for Butler, but she knew of the plan her father had conceived. Carrie also knew that if her father ever discovered Mr. Butler had done anything to her, his life would be in danger. No matter what penalty he might suffer, her father would defend his child's honor.