Little White Dog

There was an old woman who had no family still living. Her only friend was a little white dog who went everywhere with her — with one exception. The dog loved the fireplace in winter, and after the old woman went to bed he would sometimes go and lie in front of the warm coals. Usually though, the dog slept at the very edge of the bed on a throw rug.

The woman wouldn’t allow the dog on the bed with her, but if she became frightened or had a nightmare, she would put her hand down to the little white dog and he would lick it reassuringly.

One night the woman was reading her newspaper just before going to sleep. She shivered and pulled the comforter up around her as she read that a mental patient had wandered off from a nearby hospital. No one knew if the patient was dangerous or not; he was a suspect in the murders of several women who had lived alone.

The woman turned out the lights and tried to sleep, but she was frightened, and tossed and turned fitfully. Finally, she reached down to where the little white dog slept. Sure enough, a warm, wet tongue began to lick her hand. The woman felt reassured and safe, and left her hand dangling off the bed as she turned and settled in comfortably. She opened her eyes for a moment and looked through the open door into the living room.

There in front of the fireplace, sat her little white dog, gazing at the coals and wagging his tail.

Down beside the bed, something was still licking her hand.