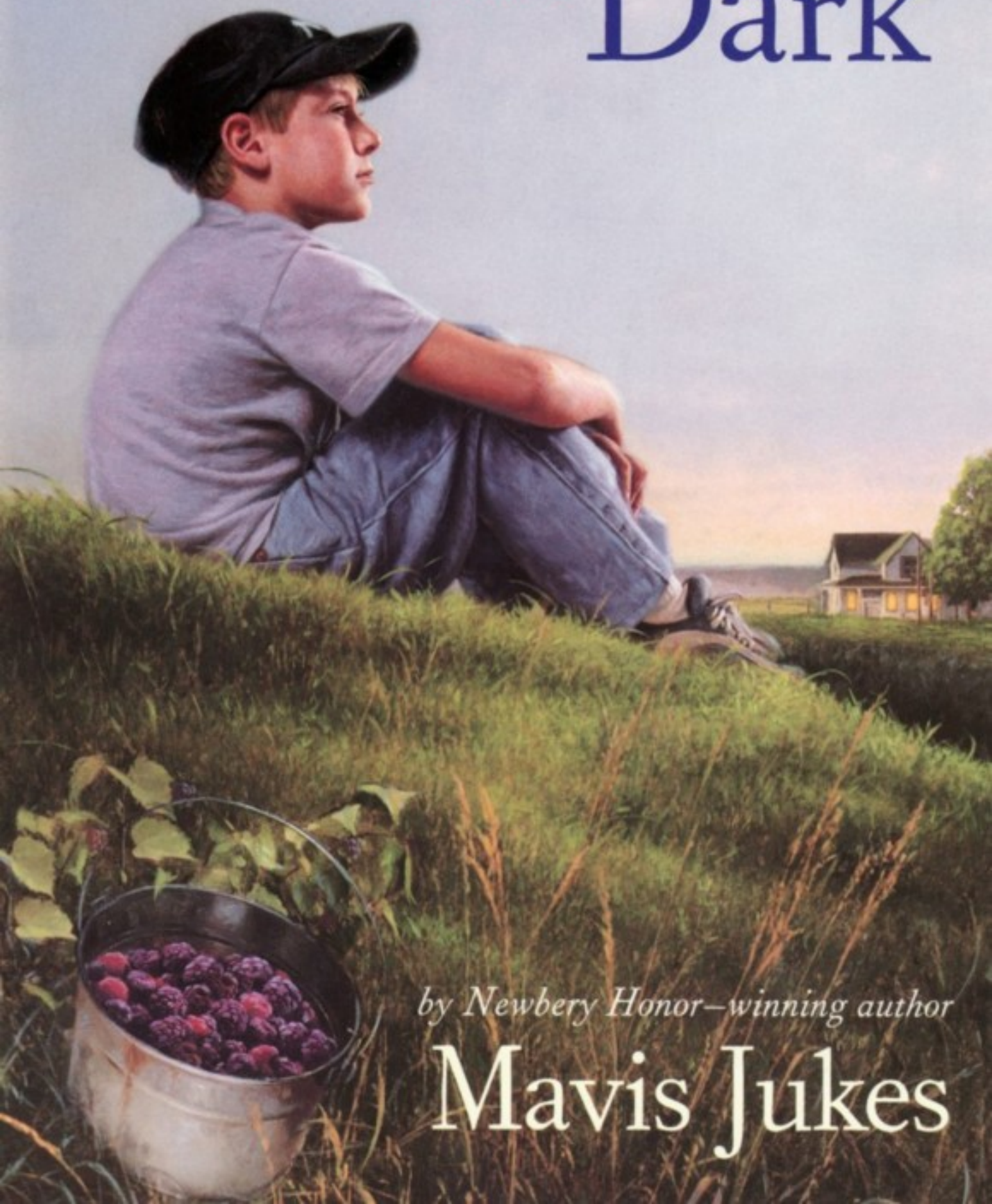


Blackberries *in the* Dark



by Newbery Honor-winning author

Mavis Jukes

chapter 1

When Austin got off the airplane, his grandmother was waiting for him—wearing a white linen suit and white linen shoes and a hat with artificial cherries on it.

“Hello, Austin,” she said. They hugged. She smelled of flowers. “You’ve grown taller! How was the flight?”

“Fine,” said Austin.

“You must be hungry.”

“Not really,” said Austin. “I ate on the plane.” He swung his pack up onto one shoulder. They walked to the baggage claim, holding hands.

"My neighbor Wayne McCabe drove me to the airport to pick you up," said Austin's grandmother. "You remember Wayne. He's parked out front."

"Yup," said Austin.

"Wayne knows I don't like to drive myself places. He's been wonderful to me since Grandpa died."

Austin said nothing. His suitcase slid from the conveyor onto the carousel. He lifted it off when it came around.

"Out those doors," said Austin's grandmother, pointing. "You lead the way."

They stood on the sidewalk. "There's Wayne!" She waved at a black pickup. A tall man got out of the truck, wearing jeans and lizard-skin boots.

"Wayne, you remember Austin..."

"You've grown, boy," said Wayne to Austin. "How old are you now?"

"Nine," said Austin.

Wayne whistled. He tossed Austin's suitcase into the back of the truck.

Wayne helped Austin's grandmother into the cab. Austin climbed in beside her. His grandmother smiled at him and patted his knee. "So!

We're on our own this summer. We've got ten days together. What shall we do?"

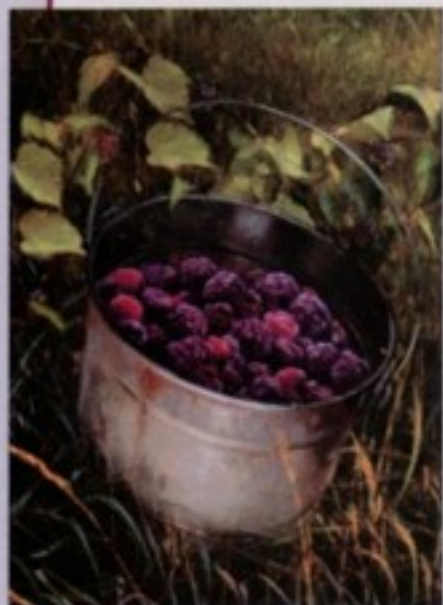
Austin stared at his hands in his lap.

"Want to come fly-fishing with me and the boys Saturday?" said Wayne. "We're going up to Two Rock."

Austin shrugged.

"Well, we'll see," said Austin's grandmother for Austin.





Blackberries *in the* Dark

Mavis Jukes

Austin's summers at his grandparents' farm were full of family traditions. He and his grandfather loved to go fishing. Or they would pick blackberries in the dark and eat them for dinner. And this summer, Grandpa was going to teach Austin how to fly-fish.

Now Grandma is alone on the farm, and everything feels different. Without Grandpa, it seems as though the traditions are lost. But with a string of broken beads and a spur-of-the-moment fishing trip, Austin and his grandmother learn how to keep their memories of Grandpa alive—and begin some new traditions of their own.

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