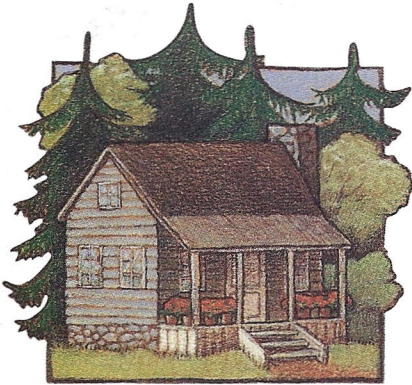


# The Brownie Story

*This story was adapted from a tale told at the beginning of Brownie Girl Scouting in 1926.*



Mary and Tommy lived with their father and grandmother in a cabin near the woods. Their father worked very hard all day. Their grandmother was too old to do the housework. Their father tried his best to keep the house clean. Mary and Tommy didn't help him very much. They just played all day long.

"What this house needs is a brownie or two," said their grandmother, looking around the messy house.

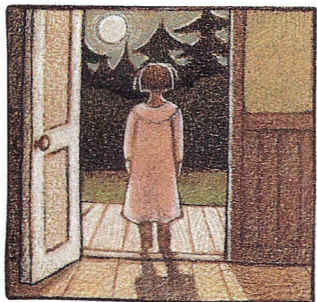
"What is a brownie, Granny?" asked Mary.

"A very helpful little person," answered their grandmother. "She'd come in before the family was up and did all sorts of chores. The brownie always ran off before anyone could see her, but they could hear her laughing and playing about the house sometimes. Brownies always helped for love."

"Oh, Granny, where are the Brownies now?" asked Tommy.

"Only the Wise Old Owl knows, my dear."





That night, Mary could hardly sleep. She kept thinking about the brownie. "There's an owl living in the old shed by the pond," she thought. "If it is the Wise Old Owl, she can tell me where to find a brownie." Mary got out of bed and hurried to the pond in the woods.

"Hoo! Hoo!" said a voice behind her.

"It's an owl! Maybe it's the one I'm looking for," said Mary.

"Please," asked Mary of the owl, "where can I find a brownie to come and live with us?"

"Well, Mary," said the owl, "I can tell you how to find one of the brownies. Go to the pond when the moon is shining and turn yourself around three times while you say this charm:

'Twist me and turn me and show me the elf.

I looked in the water and saw \_\_\_\_\_.'

Then look into the pond to see the brownie. When you see the brownie, you will think of a word that ends the magic rhyme."



Mary turned and ran to the pond. She slowly turned herself around three times while she said the rhyme:

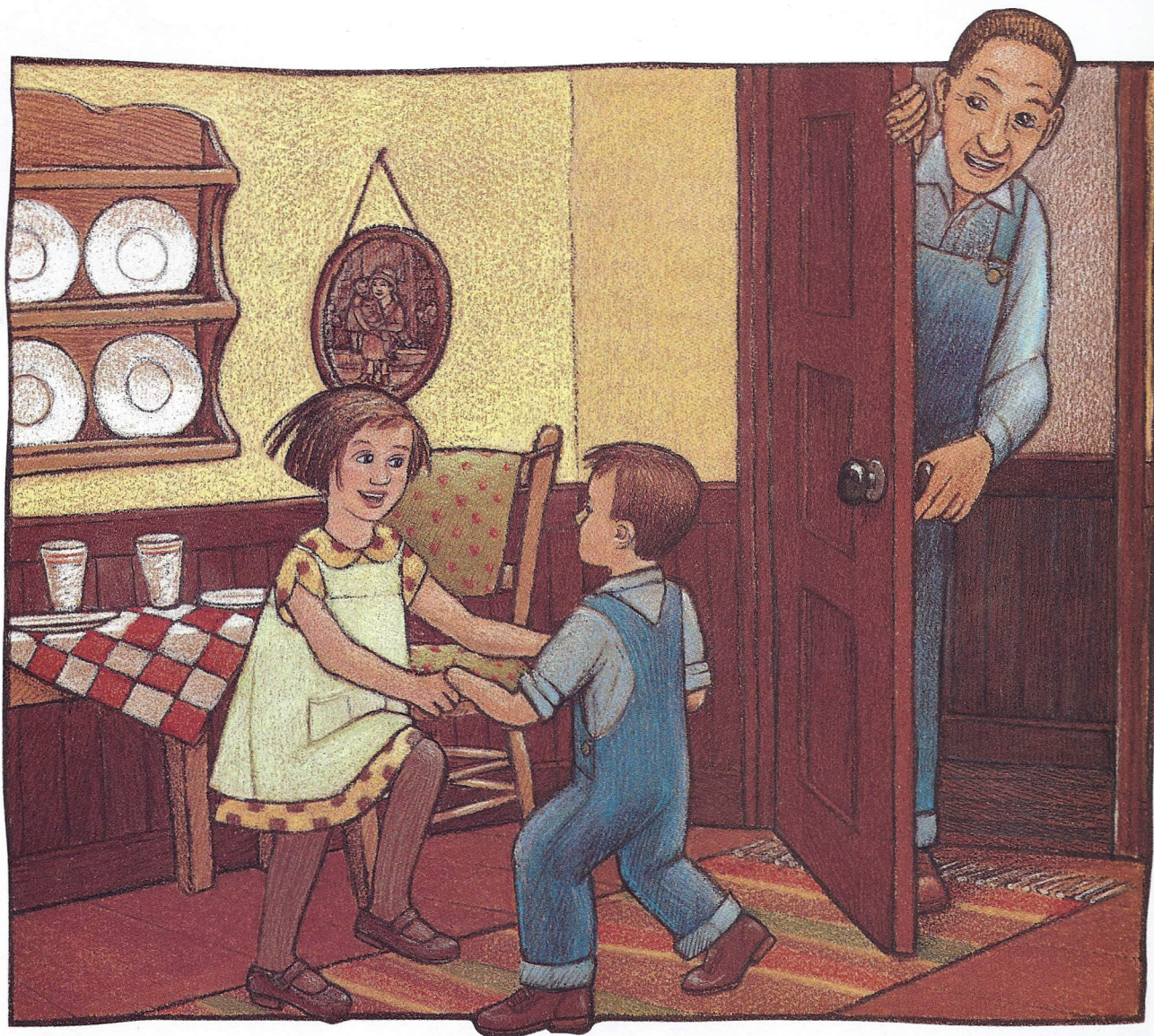
"Twist me and turn me and show me the elf.

I looked in the water and saw \_\_\_\_\_."

She stopped, looked into the pond, and saw only her own face. "Belf! Helf! Jelf! Melf!" All those words rhymed with elf but they didn't mean anything. Suddenly, she gasped. "Myself! I see nothing but myself. I'm a Brownie!" said Mary.

Mary went home and back to bed. In the early morning, she told Tommy what had happened. Together they crept downstairs and did every bit of work they could find to do before their father woke up. Then they hid in the kitchen so he wouldn't see them.





When Father came downstairs, he looked around and rubbed his eyes. The table was set, the floor was clean, and the room was as bright and shiny as a new penny.

At first, Father could not say a word. Then he ran to the foot of the stairs, shouting, "Mother! Our brownie has come back!"

"Thank Goodness!" said Grandmother. "Where is she?" Father heard laughter coming from the kitchen.

"It must be the brownie," he said. He opened the kitchen door, and saw Mary and Tommy dancing around the room.

"What's this?" he asked, his eyes twinkling. "Where are the real brownies?"

"Here we are!" yelled Mary and Tommy as they ran into their father's arms.