The Old Cabin

Long ago, when my grandfather was a boy, he used to visit his grandfather on a farm up north. On part of the farm, cows roamed with their calves. Grandfather says he used to like to follow the prints of their hooves in the mud as he walked down to the pond with his cousins. On the other side of the pond lay some woods. He told me how he and his two cousins found an old cabin in the woods. Of course they went inside. I must have looked surprised when he told me that because he added, “In those days, kids went more places by themselves. Besides, the pond and the cabin were part of our grandfather’s farm.”

Still, this cabin looked like no one had used it in a long time. An old rocking chair sat in the middle of the room. A pile of leaves filled one corner; someone had built a set of shelves along one wall. The only thing on the shelves was an old pair of scissors. What was it doing there? The children took turns guessing.

“All three of us wondered if the old cabin was magical,” Grandfather told me. “We decided elves might live there and use the scissors to make their clothes. Or maybe the cabin belonged to a family of wolves. My cousin Molly said that the pile of leaves was a comfortable bed for wolves. She went to sit on the leaves, and a pair of mice ran out of them across the floor.”

After that, the children returned to the cabin every day. They made it into their clubhouse for the rest of the summer. “We got to know those mice so well,” my grandfather said, “that they would eat pieces of cracker right from our hands.”