



Brownies

Girlguiding
Cymru

The Brownie story



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Learn how Brownies got their name

Katie and her friend Sunita were having a sleepover.
Katie's mum was busy tidying the house for Granny Betty's visit.

'Will you clear away your mess!' she exclaimed.
Katie and Sunita sighed and moved some of their things around a bit before sitting back down in front of the TV.

Soon Granny Betty arrived and chuckled. 'It looks as though you could do with a Brownie here!' she said.

Mum smiled back. 'That would be wonderful!'
'What is a Brownie, Granny Betty?' Katie asked.
'I'll tell you tonight, at bedtime,' Granny Betty replied.
'Let us clear away this mess first, shall we?'

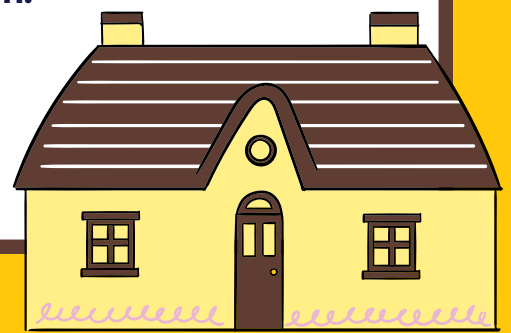
When it was time for bed, Katie reminded Granny Betty about her promise to tell them about Brownies. When she had made herself comfortable on the end of Katie's bed, Granny Betty began telling them a strange, exciting and mysterious tale.

In a pretty little cottage lived a family with two children called Betty and Tommy. Although they were friendly, the children were very messy and almost never cleared up after themselves. There were dishes to be washed, clothes to be put away and toys scattered all over the floor. Betty and Tommy did not care. They hated doing boring old housework.

'What can I do?' their mother sighed. 'I cannot keep the cottage tidy on my own. If only we had a Brownie!'

'What is a Brownie, mother?' asked Betty.
'A Brownie is a magical little creature, which slips into houses very early before anyone is awake. It tidies toys, folds clothes, washes dishes and does all sorts of helpful things,' replied her mother.
'So that is what a Brownie is,' Katie interrupted. 'They sound really useful.'

They can be,' chuckled Granny Betty. 'Shh now, and listen.'
'That is great! How can we get one?' Betty wondered.
'The wise owl in the wood might know, I suppose,' her mother said.



Later that night, Betty and Tommy crept out of the cottage into the wood. It was cold and dark and full of shadows. 'We cannot go back. We have got to find the wise owl,' said Betty firmly, even though she was scared.

'My mum always tells me not to go out alone after dark, Granny Betty,' Sunita said. 'How come Betty and Tommy were allowed?'

'You are right,' Granny Betty replied. 'Things were very different then, but this is only a story. Come on, let us get back to the tale in the dark wood'

'Hoo hoo! How do you do?' a voice hooted at the children from a nearby tree. 'The wise owl!' Tommy hugged Betty in relief. Soon the children were seated on a branch, snuggling close to the big bird's warm feathers. They explained that they were trying to find a Brownie.

'Do you know where we could find one?' asked Betty.

'Indeed I do,' hooted the wise owl and, placing her beak close to Betty's ear, she explained.

'Tommy!' exclaimed Betty.

'There is a Brownie in that pool over there. I have got to go to the pool, turn around three times, look into the water and say "'twist me and turn me and show me the elf, I looked in the water and there saw...'"'

'Who? Who? Who?' hooted the wise owl. 'Look into the water and you will find your Brownie looking back at you. Her name will finish the rhyme.'

The children raced over to the pool. Betty did exactly as the wise owl had said.

'Twist me and turn me and show me the elf, I looked in the water and there saw...'

Betty looked into the pool.

'Well, can you see it? Can you see a Brownie?' cried Tommy.

'No,' said Betty, 'all I can see is my own reflection.'

Betty and Tommy were so disappointed that by the time they reached the tree again, they were in tears.

'Boo, hoo, hoo? What is the matter with you two?' hooted the wise owl.

'We did not find a Brownie,' sniffed Betty. 'I saw no one in the water but myself.'

'Well, well, well,' said the wise owl. 'Shall we see if that fits the rhyme? Twist me and turn me and show me the elf, I looked in the water and there saw...'

'Myself!' finished Betty, sounding puzzled. 'But I am not a Brownie!'

'Too true, too true,' hooted the wise owl. 'But you could act like one for a change and so could Tommy. It might even be fun!'

Betty and Tommy had a lot to think about on the way back to the cottage. By the time they got home, they had made their decision.

If you had passed the cottage very early next morning, you might have seen a light at the window and two figures busily rushing about inside.

When their mother came down for breakfast, she could barely believe her eyes! There were no toys in sight, the washing up was done and the clothes had been put away. Everything was clean and tidy.

'Well, it certainly looks as though a Brownie has been here. How wonderful!' she cried. Betty winked at her brother and grinned.

Since then the cottage has been like a different place. Betty and her brother have been like different children. They are never bored now, they are much too busy planning their secret good turns!

When Granny Betty had turned off the light, Katie and Sunita whispered about the story they had heard and about the fun they could have pretending to be Brownies.

'We have been a bit lazy too, Sunita,' said Katie.

'Shall we get up early tomorrow and really try to be more helpful? We can lend a hand at home, but not say why!'

Before everyone else woke up, Katie and Sunita crept downstairs, tidied away all their things and laid the table for breakfast. They each promised to be good Brownies from then on.

