

## *The Forest Cottage*

For just a moment now, I want you to forget where you are and come with me to another place. It's a wonderful, safe place I want to share with you.

We are in a great forest way up in the mountains. The sun is shining overhead. It filters down through the tall trees, to where we are. Stop and feel the warmth of the sun on your arms and your neck. It's such a wonderful warm feeling. Take a slow breath, and relax. And now we're ready to look around this forest.

We begin to walk among the trees, and you wonder, what kind of trees are they? Stop for a moment and look. You can walk right up to one and reach out to touch it. How strong and solid it feels. And there is a sweet scent of bark and leaves all around us.

Wait. Do you hear that? It's a bird singing, somewhere, up among the branches. Its song is so pure and full of joy. Let's just listen for a moment. And over there, among those green bushes! -- look- it's a deer! No, there's a whole family of them, standing very still, looking at you. We don't want to frighten them, so we stay very still, too. (Pause.) And now the deer are beginning to nibble some leaves. They are not afraid of us at all. Aren't they graceful? Their coats are so smooth and shiny in the sunlight. There's a buck, the male deer, with beautiful antlers; and the doe, the mother deer; and there are two little fawns. They have such big, deep, brown eyes. Every so often they glance over our way, but not out of fear. They look our way just as they look at any other part of the peaceful scene around them, noticing what is there, and seeing us as just another part of that scene.

And now the deer are beginning to move off among the trees and bushes, so why don't we move on, too? Let's walk ahead up to the top of this little hill. The forest continues right over the hill and down the other side. Below us, just along the banks of a stream, we can see the most beautiful little house. It's made from the same kinds of trees and rocks that are all around us, and there are clear glass windows looking out over the stream and the forest.

I just remembered that our friend told me this place was here, and that we could use it. Let's walk down the hill and right up the steps, across the shaded porch to the wooden door. You reach out and turn the knob. This is such a safe place that the door is never locked. Open the door. Let's walk in.

Inside it's one open sunny room. There's a fireplace at one end made of the same stones you see in the forest, and there's a lovely low fire crackling and rustling. There are cozy chairs in the room, and wooden tables, and soft colored rugs on the wooden floor. Notice the pictures on the wall. Some show the places from your own past that you especially love to think about, places where you felt safe and happy.

One whole wall of the room are bookcases, filled with wonderful books. Some are picture books, and some are chapter books with stories in them, or books about some of things that interest you the most. Let's walk over and look. You can pull a book down from the shelf to look at it if you want to. And I really like how, scattered every so often among the books on these shelves, there are little vases with flowers in them, or little statues, or interesting stones or bits of wood from the forest outside the house.

If you want to find a place in one of the big easy chairs, you can bring a book with you, or you can choose one of the chairs that looks out the wide front window into the forest, or one that faces the fireplace. There are foot stools, too, so you can put your feet up. What a comfortable place! There's even food and drink on the table, all your favorites, waiting for you. There's no hurry about going back. The people who need to know, know just where we are; and the rest of the world can wait, while we stretch out and relax, and listen to the fire crackle, and watch the shadows gather over the little forest and the stream. I'm so comfortable! How about you! Why don't we just nod off here, right where we are in our big cozy chairs with our feet up and the fire burning steadily as the night comes on gently.

Tomorrow, I'll show you the nests of some birds, and we can go explore the little lake the stream runs into. But for now, just set that book down, and close your eyes, and sleep.

From the Recording, *"Sweet Dreams"*

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## *The Tropical Island*

Get comfortable now, and let's go somewhere wonderful together.

Tonight, we're on an island far out in the blue green sea; and, oh, what a beautiful place it is.

When you walked on the beach today, you left footprints in the golden white sands, and you built sand castles. Do you remember?

And do you remember, also, how after awhile, the waves washed up on the beach, and lapped at the foot of the castle, and finally washed your sand castle away? But you didn't mind because you knew that tonight you were staying on the island, and tomorrow you could build as many more sand castles as you chose to.

But where will you sleep on this beautiful island? Oh, in a special place!

Let's go there now. Let's walk out from among the tall waving palm trees. Do you hear the breeze high atop the trees? There are coconuts growing on some of them. It's getting too dark to see them now. They are so high above us. And now, we'll walk down across the beach.

*What's this? You weren't on this part of the beach before.*

Look! There's a hut made of dry grass and wood, and - - how could it be? It seems to float upon the waves. I see now. It's built up on high wooden legs so that it's several feet above the waters of the bay. There's a dock, and it runs right out from your beach to the wonderful hut. Let's walk out there, shall we?

Now that we're out from under the trees, stop and look up for a minute.

Far above us, all the stars are scattered like the grains of sand on this beach, thrown across the tropical night sky. You've never seen so many stars, or seen them shining so brightly, or seen so many colors. There's a great stillness here.

Look! A shooting star! Quick, make a wish...

I hope you wished for something wonderful, and that your wish comes true.

Walking out upon the dock now, can you see the moon floating high over the mountain that is in the center of our island? In the moonlight, we can see clearly where we are walking. The beams of white moonlight are thrown across the water, too, and we hear the gentle sound of the waves as they tap lightly against the legs of our hut. We are safe and secure here, and it's a nice sound, a gentle relaxing sound. Hear it?

Now let's walk in the doorway of our hut. Look, over there in one corner there is a hammock hanging. You could sleep there tonight if you'd like. Or would you like to rest on the bed over on the other side? You choose.

There's a table here, too. Let's go see what's on the table before you lie down.

Why, it's one of those big sea shells you can put to your ear. Go ahead. Pick it up. Do you hear the echo? Of course, here you can already hear the sea, can't you? You don't need to listen to a shell. Still, it's a soothing sound. All right, put the shell back down, and go find your place to curl up for the night. You lie down, and I'll show you a surprise I think you'll like...

Good. *Are you cozy now?* See this heavy string hanging down, right from the ceiling? Watch what happens when I pull on it.

Look! A piece of the ceiling opens up. A big flap of it pulls right back, so you can look out, straight up to those stars.. and a little bit of moon, too... The moon's just beginning to peek in through that opening. I know she'll keep moving on until she can look down and look straight at you.

But now it's time to try to sleep. Go ahead, relax, and listen to those little waves tap.. tap.. tapping against the legs of your beautiful hut.

Out in the lagoon, I heard a splash a moment ago. I think it was a fish jumping, getting ready to sleep, taking one last little leap in the moonlight before it goes down into its watery home and sleeps there.

Now, you rest, and listen to the waves,. Perhaps if you are quiet, you'll hear another fish jump out in the lagoon in a few moments.

Why don't you wait, and listen, and sleep.. and dream of how tomorrow you will walk the golden white beaches and play among the palm trees.. and even ride a horse there, if you'd like.

But tonight is for rest..

and quiet..

and calm..

and sweet, sweet dreams.

From the recording: "*Good Night*"  
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