



Glen and the Silver Bell



Glen the deer was the smallest of his friends, and the youngest too. Max the elk was taller and much bigger. Ned the bear cub was faster. Glen wished he could be the best at something, just once. One cold morning, the three friends hiked up the hill to explore a cave.



Max wore his silver bell on a string. It was a gift from his dad, and he loved it. Ned ran ahead and got there first. Max took the longest steps. Glen came last, as always. "I am always slower than you two," he said sadly.



Inside, the cave was colder than the hill, and it got darker with each step. Then Max bumped his head on a low rock. The string snapped! His silver bell fell, bounced across the floor, and rolled into a narrow crack at the very back of the cave.



"My bell!" cried Max. He tried to squeeze into the crack, but he was much too big. Ned tried next. He pushed his arm in as far as it would go. "I can feel nothing but rocks," said Ned. "I need a longer arm."



They poked a long stick into the crack, but the bell had rolled too deep. Max sat down with his head low. Glen looked at the crack. It was the deepest, darkest part of the cave, and he felt a little afraid. But it was just his size. "Let me try," said Glen.



"I am smaller than you two. I think I can fit." Glen got down on his knees and crawled in. The rocks were cold and damp on his back. It was so dark that he could not see his own nose. He crawled slowly, inch by inch, and felt along the ground.



Then he heard a soft ring. There was the bell! Glen picked it up with his teeth and crawled back out, quicker than he went in. "You got it!" yelled Max. He gave Glen the biggest hug. "You are the kindest and bravest friend I have."



"Max and I could never have done that," said Ned. Glen grinned all the way home. The sun felt warmer outside the cave. He was still the smallest, and now he was glad. That day, the smallest friend was the best one for the job.