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*THE CAVE*

A boy and a girl decided to run away together, not for love—they were too young for that—but for adventure. They would go out into the world, they said, look danger in the eye, and laugh. Upon their return they would astound the people of their village with tales of their bravery, their cunning, and, if all went as planned, their derring-do.

The village in which the boy and the girl lived sat on the shore of a very large lake. The boy's father was a shoemaker; the girl's mother baked scones and sold them to priests and wayfarers. Neither child found any excitement in the idea of inheriting the family business. Where was the adventure in shoe leather? What was dangerous about a scone?

On the appointed night—the night of the new moon—the boy and the girl climbed out their respective bedroom windows and met down by the lakeshore. The girl brought half a dozen scones and a jug of apple cider. The boy brought a cigarette lighter that belonged to his father. Wordlessly the two children got into an old fisherman's boat—they told themselves they were borrowing it, not stealing it—and without a backward glance they rowed away into the black, black night.

When the sun came up, the boy and girl were thrilled to discover that they had no idea where they were. The lake was even bigger than they had known, and the shore appeared wild and menacing. It was lined with twisted trees and jagged rocks. The children looked at each other, their eyes bright. They had really done it! They had run away from home and out into the great wide world.

They rowed along the shore, eating scones and drinking cider. After a while, the boy pointed toward the open water and said, "Out to sea!"

"It's a lake," said the girl.

"A big one," said the boy. "Let's go out there and have a look around."

So they went out there and spent the rest of the day looking around.

Dusk found the boat bobbing out of sight of land and the boy and girl tired, hungry, sunburned, and cold. They tried to laugh, but it was all they could do not to cry. They would have been very happy to see the girl's mother rowing toward them with a basket of fresh scones. But no one rowed toward them. They were all alone in the middle of the lake. [continued]