



# SECRET IN THE WOODS

An adaptation of *The Tanglewoods' Secret* by Patricia St. John

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## Chapter 1

**Teacher:** Illustrations are indicated by the bold-faced numerals. Display illustrations at the appropriate times, but lay volume aside when the action of the story goes beyond what is depicted.

This volume may be told as an eight chapter story. The black triangle (▶) in the margin indicates how to divide the story into eight parts.



### ▶ Show Illustration #1

I lay in bed holding my empty stomach. I had been sent to bed without supper, as a punishment for losing my temper and being impudent to Aunt Margaret.

It had been this way for five years now, ever since my brother Philip and I had come to live with our Aunt Margaret while our mother and father went off to India as missionaries. I was four years old Philip was six. Now we were nine and 11.

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As I lay there feeling sorry for myself, I heard my brother come up the steps to my bedroom.



### Show Illustration #2

Soon I saw his head come around my door. With his finger laid across his lips he held up a squashed sweet bun which he pulled out of his sock. (The wool stuck to the bun!)

“Here, Ruth,” he whispered, “I saved this for you.”

“What else did you have for supper?” I asked, my mouth stuffed full of the bun.

“We had sausages,” Philip answered, “but they were too soft to put in my sock. They weren’t very good anyhow. You didn’t miss much.”

“Philip, what makes me say such unkind things to Aunt Margaret? I know I should not. She has been good to us and it is kind of her to allow us to live with her while Father and Mother are so far away.”

“Well, I don’t know for sure, Ruth, but I do know it is only when you get cross and lose your temper. Couldn’t you try not to be cross? Then you would not lose your temper and say the awful things you do.”

I just sighed and stuffed more bun into my already too-full mouth.

Philip held up his hand for me to listen as he cocked his head to one side. I stopped chewing and listened. It was Aunt Margaret coming up the stairs!

Philip jumped to his feet and scooted across the hall to his own room. He jumped into his bed with all his clothes on and pulled the covers up around his neck.

“Good night, Philip,” Aunt Margaret said as she tucked the covers more tightly around him.

“Good night, Auntie,” Philip answered. He sounded a little out of breath, but Aunt Margaret seemed not to notice.



### Show Illustration #3

At my door Aunt Margaret paused. “Good night, Ruth,” she said. I did not answer. I pretended to be asleep and gave out with what I thought sounded like a good snore. Aunt Margaret was not fooled.

“I’m sorry you’re still angry,” she said, as she turned and went down the stairs.

I knew Aunt liked Philip best. He was good looking and blue-eyed with light brown hair and a nice round face. Best of all he never lost his temper. I was small and thin with hair that was almost always out of place. And I did lose my temper, over and over again.

Philip and I liked our bedrooms because we were at the very top of the house. We could see the green hills off in the distance. I liked to think of the hills as a fairyland where I would go visiting when I grew up.

“Good night, Phil,” I called across the hall to my brother’s room. “See you in the morning.”



### Show Illustration #4

Early in the morning Philip slipped into my room. He wanted to look out my window to watch for the birds in the big plum tree. He was making a notebook about birds. I did the drawings. I painted the eggs and Philip did the writing. “If only I had photographs of the birds and their eggs, I might get my book printed,” sighed Philip. But the cheapest camera

costs a great deal and our money box held only two dollars and fifty cents.