

Long ago, there lived a girl named Michelle. She was 9 years old, with bright blue eyes. She was born in 1901 in a cabin next to Lake Michigan. Five years later, her family moved to a frame house deep in the pine forests of Michigan. Michelle had a bright and creative personality. She would often go to a cave she found in the middle of the forest and write stories for her younger siblings. She would also stay up late sewing by the fire for her mother.

Her mother's name was Julianne. Her father's name was Theodore. Her siblings were Kate, Anne, and Joseph. Her siblings liked to play tag and hide and seek with her, and to go walking in the woods. Her father and mother liked to go to church on Sundays, but the church was 15 miles away. So, most of the time they stayed home in the little frame house with its cozy fire and its beautiful glass windows with lace curtains.

The frame house had two stories, and a basement. On the first floor they had a kitchen. It had a table in the middle, with a red checkered cloth on it and white china plates with yellow buttercups on them. There were no chairs around the table. The family sat on stumps that Michelle's father had made for them. They also had a cookstove. It was the newest fashion and was blacked every week. They bought it in the nearby town of Rock Lake, which was 15 miles away. From the kitchen window, you could see the garden and beyond the garden you could see where the pine forest began after the clearing. Next to the kitchen was the parlor. The furniture in the parlor was from Julianne's great-grandmother. It was green with red roses on it. There was a fireplace on the left wall of the parlor. On the mantle, there was a little rag doll that was going to be Kate's when she grew old enough to take care of it. There was also some herbs and a glass vase. On the second story, there were three rooms. The first room was her mother and father's room. It had yellow wallpaper and a bed with a trundle underneath where Joseph slept. There was also a dresser and a mirror. The second room was Michelle's room. It had blue wallpaper with white lilies. Michelle's bed was a homemade bed, with a straw tick mattress. She had a mirror and a rocking chair. The rocking chair was made of extra wood that her father had not used for firewood, and it had a cushion that she had made out of extra silk from her mother's church dress. She had embroidered it with a picture of a cabin next to a lake. The third room belonged to Anne and Kate. They had a mattress on the floor, and a storebought bookshelf, which held the stories that Michelle had written for them. The basement was used for tools, firewood, and storing food from the garden.

In the winter, times were hard. If the vegetable garden failed, they would have to go pick berries, which were sometimes scarce. Wood was also a problem. In the winter, when it got dark earlier, they would need more light. So, every Monday, their mother would make candles. They also had to make warm clothes out of wool. Michelle and her mother would

spin, weave and dye the wool, then make the clothes. During the summer and spring months, besides planting a garden, their father would chop down trees for firewood. Firewood would be stored in the basement with the food for the winter.

Once, when Michelle was walking through the woods, she heard a noise. Then, she saw what made the noise. It was a tiny and injured fox that was caught in a trap. So, she removed the trap and let the fox go. A week later, she was told to go find her siblings, who were playing by the creek. Before she got to the creek, it had gotten dark, but she continued. Before she got to the creek, she heard the sound of a great black bear. Suddenly, the fox she had helped, jumped out of mid-air and killed the bear. Then, she gave the fox a hug and took it home where she found her siblings hiding in the basement.

One year later, on Kate's fifth birthday, Michelle was going to pick berries for the cake, when she found a maple tree whose sap was pouring out of the tree. She instantly ran home and told her father, who gathered his syrup making supplies. When they got to the tree, he went right to work. After gathering the sap, he took it home to his wife, who boiled it and made syrup. They had syrup cake for Kate's birthday and Michelle gave Kate a leather-bound copy of all her favorite stories. Michelle had worked on the stories when she went to the cave to write. She had also embroidered a skirt for Kate. It had daisies and buttercups along the waist, and was made of blue wool, which she had made herself.

One day, Father said, "I think we should all go to town tomorrow." And Mother replied, "What a splendid idea, I think we would all love to go to town tomorrow." The next day they all woke up early. Father loaded the wagon, and they all set off for town. The first shop they went into was a fabric store and Mother said, "Well, Michelle, we will need to get you a new winter dress. Now that you are old enough, we will get the fabric from the store." Michelle picked a blue wool with poppies on it. Mama picked some white linen to make a collar and some cuffs. The next store was the dry goods store. Papa bought sugar, flour, and some buttons. Then they ate a picnic and went home.

Years later, when Michelle had her own children, she looked back on her childhood and remembered it as one of the happiest times of her life.