

LORD ROBERT STEPHENSON SMYTH BADEN-POWELL
By Carole Cooney

(Pronounced: Baden like maiden and Powell like pole)

Setting: Charter House School; The surrounding woods; The Study Hall

Characters:

Narrator

Headmaster Paul

Deputy Headmaster Charles

Assistant Headmaster Jeffrey

Stephe - the nickname of Lord Baden-Powell

Narrator: Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell's nickname was Stephe. As a young lad, he was sent to the very distinguished and private Charter House School in England. He excelled in sports, music and leadership. He loved learning new skills such as scouting, hunting, woodcraft and painting. However, he was only mediocre in his studies. Many times he would hide from his Masters in the surrounding woods. One day, Stephe could not be found.

Headmaster: I say, Charles, it has come to my attention that Baden-Powell is missing *again*.

Deputy: Headmaster Paul, I have an upper classman looking for him but, I say, he has a most unusual way of disappearing.

Assistant: Yes, Headmaster Paul, what are we to do with him? He's not doing well in any of his core curriculum classes. It seems in mathematics he has given up the study.

Deputy: I say, I've read his reports and in French he has become very lazy, and often sleeps in school. And now these disappearances are becoming much too frequent.

Narrator: While the Masters continued their discussion, Stephe secretly listened to them while crouched under the stairwell.

Stephe: (speaking to himself) A-hah! The Masters are so busy *talking*, I can now make my get-away to the woods.

Narrator: Swiftly, Stephe ran out the side door and into the English Garden maze. Because he had done this so many times, he knew exactly which pathways would lead to the exit.

Directions: While Stephe and the Narrator are telling what Stephe is doing, a student or group of students may pantomime or demonstrate with movement and lecture how the various tasks are accomplished such as: building a rabbit trap, preparing to cook a rabbit, building a small fire with a spit, putting out a fire and leaving no traces. This would be a perfect activity for Scouts.

Stephe: (speaking to himself) Now, I'm going to gather some branches and with my trusty knife whittle them into strong poles. And I'll need some pine needles and twigs to set a fire. Now, to catch a rabbit!

Narrator: Yes, Stephe was clever in catching a little rabbit. He would then prepare it, light a little fire and roast his catch. How delighted he was when his feast was ready! Once he finished, he carefully covered the ashes of the fire with soil, pouring water on them and stirring them to make certain the fire was out. He cleaned himself up and quietly returned to study hall as if nothing had happened.

Assistant: (seeing Stephe) Well, well, Stephe. Up to your old tricks again?

Stephe: Whatever do you mean, Assistant Headmaster Jeffrey? I was just out for a breath of fresh air. It's such a grand evening, isn't it?

Assistant: Why indeed it is! But that is *not* the point! Where have you been?

Stephe: As I told you, I was outside taking a walk in the woods. You know it's good for the spirit! May I return to my desk now? It's time I started on my school work. You wouldn't want me to fail now, would you?

Narrator: Stephe was a clever young lad who had a way with words. He fooled his Headmasters once again. Little did they know the rabbit experience would be useful to him when he wrote famous books about Scouting.