

THE BUG-EYED BURGLAR

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Years ago, in the mid 1940's, I hired out to the Moore Lee Drilling Company. They were oil well drilling contractors. I had never worked in the oil fields. I was in my middle twenties. We had drilled a good oil well, and we were going to run pipe in it the next day. The boss sent me over in Osage County to get some tools we would need the next day to run pipe with. They had another rig going there, which was around 50 miles one way. I got back at our rig at 11 o'clock that night. No one was there; they had quit at 5 o'clock and had gone home. I was told to lock the truck and put the keys just in front of the left front wheel; so I did, then went home. I wasn't supposed to come to work until noon the next day. Around 8:30 the next morning my brother, Kenneth, woke me up. He said, "They need the keys to the truck. The boss is uptight about this because they are shut down and can't do a thing. They have to have the truck to move the pipe into the rig." I told Kenneth, "I left the keys right where I was told to." Kenneth said, "They can't find them and the boss is somewhat put out about this." So I got dressed and then we went to the drilling rig which was four miles away. When we drove up, the boss said to me, "Why didn't you leave the keys where I told you to leave them!" I said, "I did leave the keys where you told me to! I left the keys just in front of the left front wheel." There were two keys on a leather key holder, but they were gone now. Kenneth

and I got down on our hands and knees by the truck wheel. We both knew what we were looking for. We could see where a number of weeds had been cut off very recently with only the stubs left. We both knew a little mouse had been there and had taken those truck keys. The little mouse was making her a bed somewhere with the tops of those weeds. If we found her little bed, then we'd have our truck keys. We told the other men to fan out and start looking for a pile of rocks close by for a little mouse and her weed bed. The men started laughing and said "You Firey boys are crazy!" Our boss asked, "About how long till it take you two great detectives to find them truck keys?" We told him, "Just as soon as we can find a pile of rocks close by." Just a little later we found a pile of rocks down below the drilling rig on the side of the hill about 200 feet from the truck. Kenneth and I started digging out the loose rocks. The other men were just standing around doing nothing but making a lot of smart remarks. They said, "You Firey brothers have got to be out of your mind! You guys have went off the deep end for sure." We kept on digging, then we saw some green weeds. After moving a few more rocks, there was the little bug-eyed mouse sitting in her bed - then she ran away. Kenneth began to sort among the fresh cut weeds in the little mouse's bed. There were the two shiny keys; but most of the leather key holder was gone. We could see where the little

mouse had been chewing on it. There must be something about leather, maybe the salt, that attracts the mice. The men were standing there with their mouths open and said, "What do you know - Them Firey boys aren't so crazy after all!" Those fellows wouldn't have found those keys in a hundred years. Now this is how it happened a long time ago in the oil fields.

