

## *THE STAR*

**A** number of years ago, before there was a town here, there was a forest. In the forest lived a husband and wife and their daughter. They were very poor and so every day the mother and daughter went out to gather food. At first they gathered the roots, berries and nuts from nearby their home but soon the food nearby became scarce and the mother and daughter would travel farther and farther from their home to find food to eat.

One morning the daughter awoke to find her mother had already left for the day's gathering. She waited and waited but her mother did not return. Finally, late in the day her father came back from his day of work and found only his daughter. Their worry grew as the sun



lay down and the moon crept into the purple sky—and still the girl’s mother did not return.

Slowly, pinpricks of light began to dot the dark sky. The very first star twinkled brightly at the little girl as she sat watching at the window hoping for her mother to return. She began to make a wish—“Starlight, starbright, first star I see tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might, have this—.” and as she watched, the twinkling star began to arc across the sky, and then fall toward the earth, until it landed just beyond the hill.

She left her father sleeping in a chair by the door, and taking her warmest cloak and gloves she crept out into the night toward the hill where the star had fallen. Her journey was quick as she followed the dim light that glowed beyond the hill where she found the star lying on the ground, bright and shining. She quickly picked it up and started home. Only when she crested the hill she realized that she had lost her way.

After hours of wandering the dark shadowy forest she came across a badger carrying a lantern on a crook. “Is that a star under your cloak?” asked the surprised badger.

“Yes—yes it is,” the even more surprised girl replied. I found it over the hill, but I’ve lost my way home.

“Ahhh.” replied the badger. “Well then I will tell you a secret about stars. Inside every star is a wish—if you can open it that is. Although, I think the light preferable.”

The girl looked down at the star she held and could see no openings. She longed to open it to wish

her mother to return home safe and sound. When she looked up the badger was gone and she realized where she was, not far from her home. She quickly ran in, woke her father and told her all about the star and the wish the badger had told her about.

The rest of the night the girl and her father worked to find a way to open the shining star but they could not. Finally, in despair, they fell into a restless nights sleep.

The next morning they were woke by the sound of knocking on their front door. The girl woke and opened it. It was her mother! She told them how she had traveled so far to gather food for them and gotten lost, and how after the sun went down she had met a badger who had told her that the best way to find her way home was to follow the light, and that is just what she’d done.

The little girl never tried to open the star again.