

THE MIRACLE

The storm hammered at Anna's window, as she peered up into the murky skies. Her body was tense with fear. Mathew had been gone a long time collecting firewood in the larch forest. She pictured her brother's soft and angelic face turn gaunt as he entered the hostile wood. Anna had always felt an unearthly presence in that forest. She had a deep longing for her mother's gentle touch and reassuring words. Biting back her tears she gathered up a few provisions and wrapped her mother's old tattered but elegant scarlet cloak around her thin body. Reality hit her as she sunk her teeth into her bottom lip; she had to be brave now.

As she left the hut a gust of wind sped past her almost sweeping her off her feet. The powerful gale drove the heavy rain across the land making it hard to see. Anna looked back at her home, desperate to be back inside in front of the glowing fire; but she had to find her brother.

Clutching her cloak, she headed for the forest. As she entered the unwelcoming wood, she pointed her spotlight at two gleaming eyes glaring at her. To her relief it was just a lonely night owl, scavenging for food. Anna moved quickly through forest, not knowing where she was going and stumbling over stumps and twigs. Their parents had tragically died three years previously, having been savagely attacked by a bear in these very woods! She had been haunted by that day and it had taken tremendous courage to return to the forest.

Suddenly, a bloodcurdling scream pierced the air. Anna's brain froze. Sprinting round trees and over boggy land, she could barely breathe. To her utter shock, Anna found her terrified brother cornered by a colossal bear, poised to strike. This was the creature that had brutally destroyed their dear parents. A rush of anger flooded through Anna's body. She surged forward to throw herself on the great beast. Suddenly a blinding light lit up the entire forest. The bear sunk down onto four legs, gazing at this wondrous light and fell into a deep sleep.

Anna saw an angelic face emerge from the brightness and in disbelief she realised it was her beloved mother.

"Mother, is that really you?" sobbed Anna.

"My beloved children, there is not a minute of the day I haven't been watching over you. I have come down here to protect you Mathew: you needed me," the being said softly.

"I will always be there for you." Reaching her arms out with joy, Anna hugged her mother tightly. After a while the being took the two children by the hand and lead them back to the wooden shack.

"May love surround you always," cried their beautiful mother, then she vanished into thin air. The children heard a whisper in the wind, "If you ever need me, I will be there."

Then silence and peace fell over the land, and all was well.