



One small act of kindness leads to another... and another...



The starkeeper

written and illustrated by Faith Pray



To Molly, for turning a wish into a star.
To Maria, for believing.
And to starkeepers everywhere.

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The world had been dark for a long time.
Rainy. Lonely. Dark.

Every morning, the girl fed the fish and waited for things to be different.

But every morning, the world stayed the same.

On one especially wet day, the girl got tired of waiting.

She made an enormous wish. She wished the lonely dark away.



A star!



It was beautiful and warm and perfect.
She longed to keep it for herself.



But the girl could tell that the
star didn't want to be kept hidden.
It needed the girl to help it shine.

Surely the best place
for a star to light up the
world, she thought, was
someplace grand.



But the people
in the fancy house
were busy. They
didn't even want
to stop and see
the star.



The girl and the star felt small.



Next, the girl tried taking it to the shops.
Shopkeepers are sensible, the girl figured.
Maybe they would know what to do.



But even though she
knocked and knocked,
the doors stayed shut.

The girl and the star shivered.



The star was gloomy now.
Shrinkier. Wilted. The girl
felt it, too. By now, the star
was as small as a smudge.
And the world felt the same.

Finally, the girl took the star to the center of the village.
Maybe someone there would be able to help.

But no one seemed interested.

*I must not be very good at taking care of stars,
thought the girl. Perhaps I should forget my wish.
Someone else could try to help it shine.
She found a perfect spot for giving up.*



Only, someone was already there.
Two someones.





Maybe there was
something the girl
could do.

It was a very small thing.

She shared her
sweater . . .
and a tiny piece
of the star.

Now the star
seemed rounder.
Shinier. Glowy.



Maybe, thought the girl, there
were lots of small somethings
she could do with the star.

The girl and the star went everywhere.
Each time she found something to do
or someone to help, the girl broke off
a bit of the star.



And each time, the star grew.



Maybe she did know
how to be a starkeeper.



Because it did shine.
Not all at once.
Not in a grand way.
But in tiny sparks that
warmed and flamed . . .



... and joined stars upon
stars upon stars
that chased away
the lonely dark.





And the world was different.