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# Shiny Pippin and the Broken Forest

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For E, L, R and C,  
with all my love.

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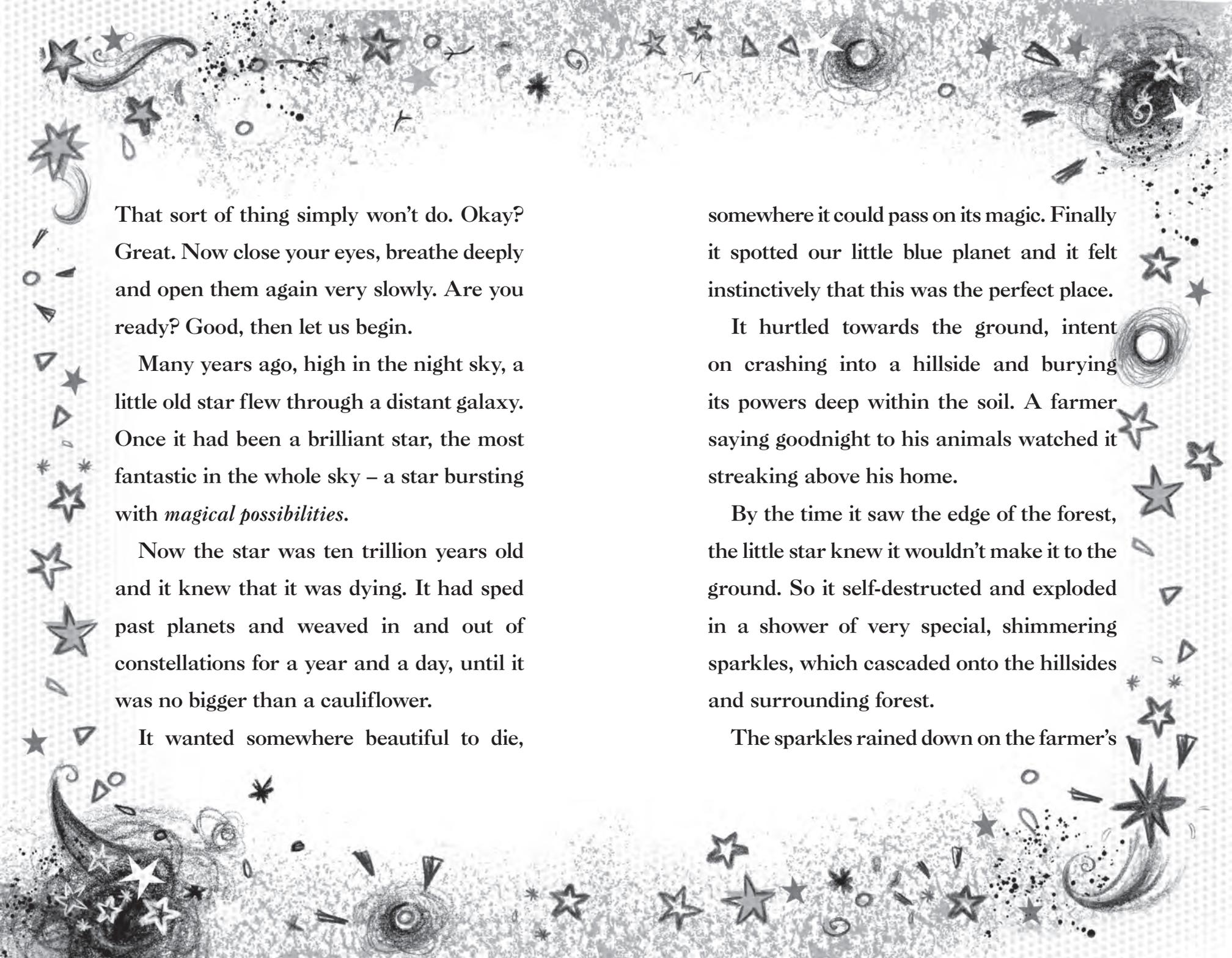
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## PROLOGUE

# Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

**P**ermit me, lovely readers, to take you back in time. Firstly though, wherever you are, it is important that you should be comfy. For example, if you are in bed, make sure there are no spiky pieces of Lego under your bum-bum.



That sort of thing simply won't do. Okay? Great. Now close your eyes, breathe deeply and open them again very slowly. Are you ready? Good, then let us begin.

Many years ago, high in the night sky, a little old star flew through a distant galaxy. Once it had been a brilliant star, the most fantastic in the whole sky – a star bursting with *magical possibilities*.

Now the star was ten trillion years old and it knew that it was dying. It had sped past planets and weaved in and out of constellations for a year and a day, until it was no bigger than a cauliflower.

It wanted somewhere beautiful to die,

somewhere it could pass on its magic. Finally it spotted our little blue planet and it felt instinctively that this was the perfect place.

It hurtled towards the ground, intent on crashing into a hillside and burying its powers deep within the soil. A farmer saying goodnight to his animals watched it streaking above his home.

By the time it saw the edge of the forest, the little star knew it wouldn't make it to the ground. So it self-destructed and exploded in a shower of very special, shimmering sparkles, which cascaded onto the hillsides and surrounding forest.

The sparkles rained down on the farmer's

little cottage, where his wife and twin baby children slept. They drifted down the chimney and they fizzed and flickered and bounced through each of the rooms. Outside, all was quiet – until a little bird began to sing.

Over time, the star's magic did soak deep into the soil and the farmhouse, where it waited and it waited. A great many years later, this twinkly, shiny, brilliant magic had grown into something rather wonderful and this, my lovely readers, is what our story is all about.



## Granny's House

**N**ow, my fabulous friends, let me introduce you to the hero of our story. Her name is Pippin. She is not one of those super-confident heroes you read about in other books. She is just a little girl who loves her mum and dad and her granny and her pet mouse, Tony. Her hobbies are

making snowmen, playing the recorder and colouring in. She lives in a pretty little town called Funsprings, which perches on a steep-sided valley on the edge of a magical forest.



So the day our story begins, Pippin was at her granny's. Pippin spent a great deal of her time at her Granny Margaret's because her mum and dad were **ALWAYS** busy, busy, busy but **NOT** quite as busy as Pippin, who was **ALWAYS** busy, busy, busy, busy, busy, busy, busy.

She was at her granny's that very morning, with Tony snuggling in her shirt pocket and a huge smile on her face. Her eyeballs were alive with sparkles of excitement, because her granny had just bought an enormous television.

'Grandmama, wow, what a massive new tellyvision you've got!' she shrieked.

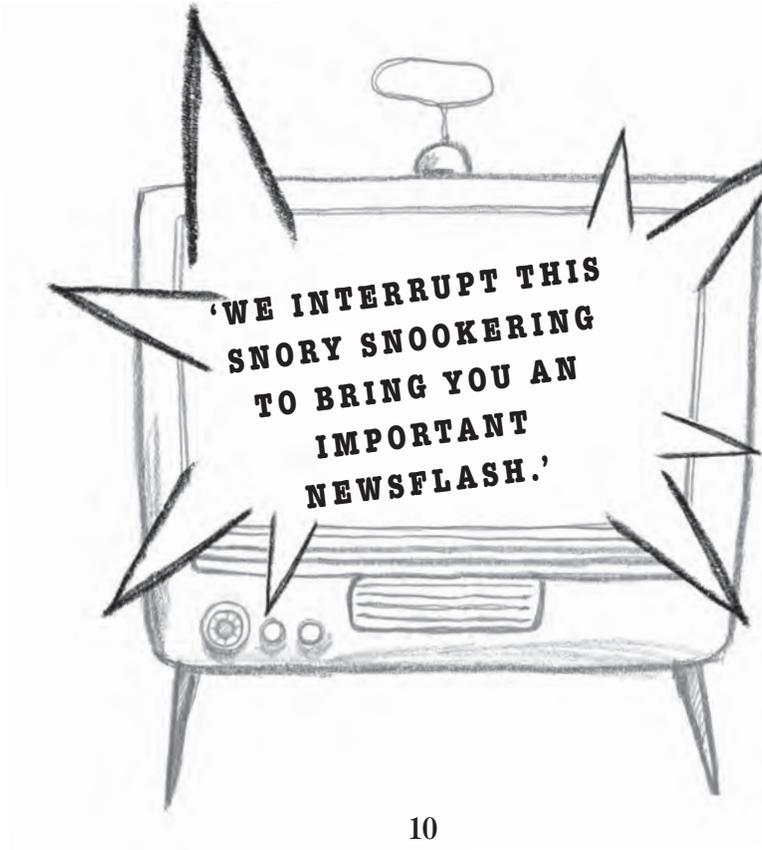


‘All the better for watching the snooker,’ said Granny. ‘Let’s stick it on and do some sofa snuggling,’ she added with an ancient twinkle in her one working eye. (Granny’s

other eye was always covered with an eye patch. Sometimes the little old lady told Pippin that she’d lost it whilst battling an evil scientist on top of a fast-moving train. Other times she told Pippin that her eyeball was in the tummy of a crocodile somewhere on the Zambezi River. Whether any of these stories were true or not didn’t matter – it was exactly this sort of special funusual nonsense that made Pippin adore her granny.)

So the two of them snuggled down on the sofa and gazed at the enormous television. Snooker’s most ridiculous star, Donnio Sillyman, was about to play his shot with a fishing rod when . . . the picture suddenly

disappeared and an anxious-looking news reporter came on!



Granny and Pippin edged closer to the screen. They could see that the reporter was standing in a very familiar square, next to a very familiar fountain, which was blowing very UNfamiliar sand into a very familiar sky.

'Hello everybody! I'm in Funsprings, where, as you clever viewers know, it hasn't rained for A YEAR and all the rivers and streams and lakes have dried up. Well, if that wasn't bad enough, guess what – the famous fun springs of Funsprings have just run out of water! Biologists, geologists, meteorologists and all the other ologists are badly baffled and completely

confused. Viewers, this is all very serious.'

Granny got up and switched off the TV. 'So all the water has officially gone,' she sighed. Her twinkliness took on a sadder, bluer tone. 'Pippin, I have been very worried about this. What about all the poor woodland creatures? The hedgehogs? The rabbits? My goodness, what about the beautiful deer? We must do something to help them, but I am way too old and wiggly to nonsense around in the forest.'

'Grangran!' Pippin said excitedly, jumping up and down like a constipated kangaroo. (Tony the mouse was boinged around so much inside her shirt pocket

that he did six somersaults. Sometimes he wished his special friend didn't have *quite* so much energy.)

'What is it, my lovely?' asked Granny.

'I can be your legs! With your brains and my funergy we can do it, I'm sure,' said Pippin. 'We can bring the water back to Funsprings and then all the animals can drink and burp and dance in the sunshine again! What do you say, Granny? I can't do it on my own though. Say you'll help? P-LEASE?' she begged.

Granny looked at Pippin and smiled. 'You'd be surprised what things you can do on your own, my love ... I think it is time

to tell you something very important.’ Her smile went away. ‘Pippin, follow me, down to my cellar,’ she said.

‘I didn’t know you had a smellar, Grangran!’ grinned Pippin, with a hundred and ten kilograms of twinkliness in her tummy. Whenever Pippin had visited previously, the door had always been hidden – covered over with seventy-five aprons hanging on a hook.

These days Granny was a bit of a slow mover, so she asked for a piggywiggyback. Luckily for Pippin, tiny Granny was as light as a baby bird because she only ate marshmallows and Monster Munch and

only ever drank the bubbles from lemonade.

‘Ooh, Grangran, this is super-exciting!’ said Pippin as she walked very carefully down the stairs, her little granny clamped on her back like a silver-haired fighter pilot landing a Pippin-shaped aeroplane.

At the bottom of the stairs, Granny climbed down and began searching for the light switch. After a few moments of a-fumbling and a-mumbling very rude phrases, which I can’t possibly repeat (like ‘bum factories’ and ‘potato snakes’ – oops, I did. Tiny sozzikins everybody), she finally found the switch and turned on the light. And wow, Pippin’s eyeballs nearly popped

out and rolled under a cupboard, because what she saw was SO exciting and funusual.

Unfortunately for you, there is an ice-cream van outside my house and it is calling my name so I am going to leave the excitement for the next chapter and go and get a Cornetto. Big **sozzikins** but also yum-yum.



## Goodness Gracious Crikey and Zoink-a- Doodle Jinkies

**G**oodness gracious crikey and zoink-a-doodle jinkies!' exclaimed Pippin, wide-eyed. Granny's cellar looked like something from a