

The Mouse and the Star Thief
A TYA Play By: Megan E. Tripaldi

CHARACTERS (In order of Appearance):

MAGNOLIA – a brave mouse

CHAMOMILE – Magnolia's sibling

COMET – Magnolia's sibling

CREATURES – 3-6 shadowy, scary, creepy, crawly things that live in the dark

JUNIPER – a mole with glasses

STAR THIEF/EMBER – the person who stole Orion's Belt, a fox

CONJURER - the village magician, a fox

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES:

- CHAMOMILE, COMET, and CONJURER can all double as CREATURES.
- This play benefits from lots of movement.
- Scenes labelled with **TRAVELLING MONTAGE** should be highly choreographed moments orchestrated by the CREATURES to transition locations. This should take time; act as they are their own scenes.
- Pronouns can be changed easily to fit the cast you choose - don't let them limit you!
- In regard to music, there is no sheet music for the lyrics that are written. In workshop productions the songs have even been done as spoken word and it worked out very well. These can be epic songs or quiet, poetic, reflective moments. My only advice for this: Have Fun!

The Mouse and the Star Thief

SETTING: The darkest part of a forest.

AT RISE: In darkness we see mice running in and out gathering food.
MAGNOLIA stops to play a game by herself.

COMET:

Magnolia!

MAGNOLIA:

Huh?

CHAMOMILE:

Stop playing with the food!

MAGNOLIA:

Right. Sorry...

(Music!)

CHAMOMILE:

*Down in the forest
In a deep, dark hollow
Lies a place that we call Nocturne
There all the scariest creatures creep and crawl*

COMET:

*Down in the hollow
Where the trees are thicker
And the dark is overwhelming
The day was taken and there is no light at all*

CHAMOMILE and COMET:

*We hope a hero will come
To save us from the night
Someday our hero will come
To bring us back the light*

COMET:

*Then one morning
In our small light hollow
There was a shudder and shake
The sky grew dark and the stars all disappeared*

CHAMOMILE:

*Then from the hollow
Where the trees are thicker
And the dark is overwhelming
The things came out from the dark to eat us all*

CHAMOMILE and COMET:

*We hope a hero will come
To save us from the night
Someday our hero will come
To bring us back the -*

(She goes back to gathering.
There is a loud, terrifying noise and the mice all huddle together.)

MAGNOLIA:

What was that?

CHAMOMILE:

I don't know, I can't see -

(CREATURES can be heard growling and groaning.
We occasionally see shadows dance across the scenery.)

COMET:

Quick! Get into the tree!

(The mice all huddle together in their tree.
More shadows dance across the scenery and fade as the mice cower.)

COMET:

Are they gone?

MAGNOLIA:

I think so.

COMET:

Eh...I don't want to go back out there just yet.

MAGNOLIA:

Yeah. Let's just rest.

CHAMOMILE:

I don't want to do this anymore.

MAGNOLIA:

What do you mean?

CHAMOMILE:

This! Hiding, running, always being terrified.

MAGNOLIA:

But we're mice, it's what we do -

COMET:

Well, it is a little bit more than usual...

MAGNOLIA:

What?

COMET:

We're eating all the food that we gather. We don't have anything to bring back!

MAGNOLIA:

But - !

CHAMOMILE:

We can't stay, Maggie. We have to go find the rest of the family.

COMET:

I miss them so much. Don't you?

MAGNOLIA:

Well, I do, but -

CHAMOMILE:

But what!?! There's barely anything left here and I'm *not* going into the dark...

COMET:

She's right. We have to go home.

MAGNOLIA:

I thought this was home.

CHAMOMILE:

It was.

COMET:

But now we have to go to our new home. Where we'll be safe.

CHAMOMILE:

Please, Maggie. It's time to go. Come with us.

COMET:

We have enough food left to get us there.

MAGNOLIA:

I - I - I can't.

COMET:

Maggie, please -

CHAMOMILE:

You're being ridiculous!

MAGNOLIA:

Why? Because I believe that this is only temporary?

CHAMOMILE:

No. Because this is fruitless and I don't want to lose you.

COMET:

Neither do I.

CHAMOMILE:

Please, Maggie.

MAGNOLIA:

I love you guys. And I miss our family. But I think I have to stay.

CHAMOMILE:

Why?

MAGNOLIA:

Because I think - I think I have to find the hero.

(Her siblings stare at her for a long time.)

COMET:

Well, here -

(He hands her a bag of food.)

If you're going to see this thing through you need to eat.

MAGNOLIA:

But what about you?

COMET:

There's enough for Cam and I to get back, too. Don't worry.

(He hugs her.)

Be careful, Maggie.

MAGNOLIA:

Thank you, Comet.

COMET:

Chamomile?

(Long beat. She sighs and takes off a cloak she was wearing.)

CHAMOMILE:

Here.

(She drapes it over MAGNOLIA's shoulders.)

To keep you hidden.

(She hugs her.)

Come home soon, ok?

MAGNOLIA:

I will. I promise.

(Her siblings exit quickly and MAGNOLIA takes a moment.

It starts to sink in that she is all alone.

Night falls.

She finds a place to sleep.

The wind howls and we hear creepy noises; i.e. creaks, rattles, etc.

Shadows dance amongst the trees.

CREATURES crawl out from the trees and begin to dance in her nightmare.

As soon as they surround her, looking like they will pounce, there is a flash of light and the CREATURES go back to their hiding places.

MAGNOLIA is left huddled on the forest floor.

Slowly we hear someone crying.

It is quiet at first, but then turns into loud, raucous sobs.

She shoots up, waking from her nightmare.)

JUNIPER (off):

Ooohwoahwoahwoah....

MAGNOLIA:

Hello? Hellooo?

JUNIPER (off):

Is someone there?

MAGNOLIA:

Yes, are - are you hurt?

JUNIPER (off):

Are - are you going to eat me?

MAGNOLIA:

No, I'm a - I don't eat - well, I'm not sure what you are, but I won't eat you!

(Beat.)

Are you going to eat *me*?

JUNIPER (off):

No, of course not! I'm a vegetarian.

MAGNOLIA:

Why are you crying?

JUNIPER (off):

I'm all alone and it's dark! Why *wouldn't* I be crying?

MAGNOLIA:

Good point.

JUNIPER (off):

Thank you.

MAGNOLIA:

I'm alone, too - but neither of us will be alone if you come out.

JUNIPER (off):

I suppose you're right...

(Beat.)

MAGNOLIA:

So, um, are you on your way, or - ?

JUNIPER (off):

I'm coming, I'm coming just - just don't eat me, ok?

MAGNOLIA:

I promise I won't.

(A mole, JUNIPER comes out and sniffs around.
He wears very large, dirty glasses.)

JUNIPER:

Hello? Where are you? Sorry, it's a bit hard for me to see.

MAGNOLIA:

Oh, sorry.

(She removes her hood.)

How about now?

JUNIPER:

Hmm. Still having a bit of trouble seeing you.

(He takes off his glasses and wipes them on his shirt.)

Oh! There you are. Not terrifying at all.

MAGNOLIA:

Uh, thank you?

JUNIPER:

I'm Juniper.

MAGNOLIA:

Magnolia.

(The fumble for a second in the dark.
When they finally see each other they shake hands.)

JUNIPER:

Gosh, it's nice to meet someone who doesn't scare me.

MAGNOLIA:

Oh, likewise. It's such a relief to have company.

JUNIPER:

Ever since night spread to the whole forest things have gotten really bad. I lost my family and haven't been able to find them. They all left to find a light place, but I took a wrong turn somewhere along the way and haven't been able to find the path back. I've been alone for so long and it's really scary here...

MAGNOLIA:

I'm so sorry.

JUNIPER:

So what are you doing all the way out here? I thought mice lived at the edge of the forest.

MAGNOLIA:

We do, but my family all left for a light place. I wanted to stay and find a hero, but now I wish I left with my siblings.

JUNIPER:

Well...maybe I can help find this hero?

MAGNOLIA:

How?

JUNIPER:

I overheard my parents talking before I got lost. They said that the darkness came because of a Star Thief.

MAGNOLIA:

A Star Thief?

JUNIPER:

Uh huh. Apparently they use some kind of dark magic to take stars out of the sky and bring eternal darkness to the lands under them.

MAGNOLIA:

And one of them stole a star from above our forest?

JUNIPER:

I heard that they stole *three* stars. All three stars in Orion's Belt.

MAGNOLIA:

But - but that's impossible! Isn't it?

JUNIPER:

Apparently not.

MAGNOLIA:

Well, how do we get the stars back?

JUNIPER:

I'm not sure. I only know how they got lost.

MAGNOLIA:

Maybe we can try to find the Star Thief?

JUNIPER:

What!? Oh, no, no, no, no -

MAGNOLIA:

Why not? I bet if we can find him we can convince him to let the stars go!

JUNIPER:

But that seems dangerous! Why would he even listen to us? What if he just laughs at us? What if - what if he captures us!? Tortures us!? Feeds us to Creatures!?

(He starts to hyperventilate.)

MAGNOLIA:

Ok, ok, calm down! It's ok - nothing is going to happen to us, we just have to be brave! I'm trying to be brave, too, ok? My family believes in me, so it's what I have to do. So. This is what I'm doing. But I need you to be brave with me because keeping it up is a lot harder than it looks. Ok?

JUNIPER:

Ok...

MAGNOLIA:

Ok. Good. Thank you. But now we should rest. We don't have to be brave again until morning.

JUNIPER:

Good idea. Sleep. Great. Wonderful.

MAGNOLIA:

Great! Now to find a hollow tree...

JUNIPER:

Oh! I can help! I travel underground where it's safer. It's warm and dry, and well, a bit dirty, but you get used to it.

MAGNOLIA:

Dirt sounds less scary than being eaten.

JUNIPER:

I agree. Now come this way, watch your step -

(They crawl into a hole behind a root.

We hear echoey voices coming from the ground.)

MAGNOLIA (off):

It's so cozy!

JUNIPER (off):

It's enough for me.

MAGNOLIA (off):

Good night, Juniper.

JUNIPER (off):

Good night, Magnolia.

(We hear the sounds of night, crickets, peepers, light rustling.)

Suddenly MAGNOLIA enters the stage and we're in her dream again.
 Her feet seem to be stuck in place.
 She tries to scream for help, but can't.
 CREATURES enter and begin to dance around her, but in a non-threatening way.
 They have a message.)

CREATURES:

*Into the darkness
 Far from the light
 No longer day
 But always at night
 Follow the roots
 But step not upon
 For if you misstep
 The path will be gone
 Listen for bells
 That tinkle so bright
 And you'll find the thief
 Who hides with the night.*

(The CREATURES whisper the rhyme,
 Overlapping each other in a round as they fade back.
 MAGNOLIA fades back into the hole.
 She shoots up from bed and gasps, waking up JUNIPER.)

JUNIPER (off):

What!? What is it!? What happened!?

MAGNOLIA (off):

I - nothing, it was nothing. Go back to sleep.

JUNIPER (off):

Oh...ok. Good night, lobster...

MAGNOLIA (off):

Yeah...good night.

(CREATURES whisper the last verse of the poem in the darkness.)

(Lights shift.

MAGNOLIA and JUNIPER emerge from the roots;

MAGNOLIA is muttering the riddle to herself over and over.)

JUNIPER:

Water, check. Food, check. Glasses -

(He checks his face.)

Check! Looks like we're all set!

(He ties a blanket around his neck.)

MAGNOLIA:

What's that, a cape?

JUNIPER:

No, it's a cloak! Like yours.

(She smirks.)

What?

MAGNOLIA:

Nothing!

(JUNIPER nods and takes a deep breath.)

JUNIPER:

Shall we?

MAGNOLIA:

Hmm? Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

JUNIPER:

Are you ok?

MAGNOLIA:

Who, me? Oh, I'm fine.

JUNIPER:

You don't seem fine.

MAGNOLIA:

I was just thinking about this dream I had last night. I can't get it out of my head.

JUNIPER:

What was it about?

MAGNOLIA:

It was this odd chanting thing, like a riddle or - or a poem. It's like the creatures of the forest were trying to tell me something.

JUNIPER:

That sounds scary...

MAGNOLIA:

No, it actually felt like they were trying to help me.

JUNIPER:

Well, do you remember what they said? Maybe it was a real warning.

(The lights change, almost if she's back in the dream.)

MAGNOLIA:

*Into the darkness
Far from the light
No longer day
But always at night
Follow the roots
But step not upon
For if you misstep
The path will be gone
Listen for bells
That tinkle so bright
And you'll find the thief
Who hides with the night.*

JUNIPER:

Seems like we shouldn't take the path, but go where there is no path? I don't know...
Was there anything else?

MAGNOLIA:

That was it.

JUNIPER:

Hmm.

MAGNOLIA:

I know. Why would creatures be warning me, anyway? Seems like the opposite of what they would do.

JUNIPER:

Oh! OH! I think I get it!

MAGNOLIA:

Really? Wow.

JUNIPER:

Well, I kind of get it. There's a lot I don't understand, but if I'm not mistaken I think it's telling us the way to find the Star Thief!

MAGNOLIA:

"Listen for bells that tinkle so bright and you'll find the thief who hides with the night."
Of course! How did I not get that before? I think my dream must have been a message!

JUNIPER:

But don't forget there's a problem.

MAGNOLIA:

What's that?

JUNIPER:

We don't know what the instructions are yet.

MAGNOLIA:

Right...

JUNIPER:

But we can figure this out! We just have to work together to break it down to what we can understand.

MAGNOLIA:

Well, we know the part about the thief that hides with the night, that's obviously the Star Thief, right?

JUNIPER:

As far as we know, but we should start at the beginning.

MAGNOLIA:

Good idea.

*Into the darkness
Far from the light
No longer day
But always at night*

JUNIPER:

That's Nocturne's Hollow. Where we are now, obviously.

MAGNOLIA:

*Follow the roots
But step not upon
For if you misstep
The path will be gone*

Ok, so, follow the roots, that's obvious. Do not step on...don't step on the roots. Right? Why wouldn't we step on the roots?

JUNIPER:

"For if you misstep the path will be gone..."

MAGNOLIA:

Like, off the path?

JUNIPER:

No...*no*... OH! Like through a hole!

MAGNOLIA:

A hole? In the roots?

JUNIPER:

Mole tunnels! There are mole tunnels!

MAGNOLIA:

But I thought all the underground paths caved in? That's what my parents told me.

JUNIPER:

My family told stories of old mole caverns that were built hundreds of years ago. They were so sturdy that they couldn't cave in no matter what! I thought they were lost forever.

MAGNOLIA:

But what does that have to do with stepping on roots?

JUNIPER:

Apparently there were secret entrances under the roots so that nobody outside of the mole families could find them!

MAGNOLIA:

So that means -

JUNIPER:

We follow the trees until we find the mole caverns!

MAGNOLIA:

Then we can travel underground!

JUNIPER:

Exactly! Come on, follow me - I see better in the dark.

MAGNOLIA:

If you say so...

(TRAVELLING MONTAGE:

Music plays as CREATURES dance and form trees and shadows around them as JUNIPER and MAGNOLIA walk through the forest. In the distance there is the slightest tinkling of bells.)

JUNIPER:

Let's stop. I'm pretty sure it's night.

MAGNOLIA:

How can you tell?

JUNIPER:

It has a smell. Sort of like the way it smells before it snows.

MAGNOLIA:

I love that smell. Should we set up a camp?

JUNIPER:

I have a better idea.

(He takes two steps back, three steps to the right, and disappears.)

MAGNOLIA:

Juniper!? JUNIPER!? Where did you go!?

JUNIPER (Off):

Take two steps back.

(She does.)

Now three steps to your right.

(She does.

Suddenly she disappears.

They are both out of sight.

Suddenly we see the inside of the Mole Caverns.)

MAGNOLIA:

Where are we?

JUNIPER:

Mole caverns. It's safer than sleeping outside.

MAGNOLIA:

Wow! This is amazing! How did you find it?

JUNIPER:

Mole's intuition. Plus that was part of the story my parents told me. That's how I knew which roots to avoid. They have a certain look to them.

MAGNOLIA:

You are so smart, Juniper.

JUNIPER:

Oh, gee...

(TRAVELLING MONTAGE:

Music plays as they enter into what looks like a tunnel covered in vines and roots. As they walk and walk the music begins to reflect how exhausted and irritated they are becoming.

Though they don't mean to, JUNIPER and MAGNOLIA can't help snapping at each other.)

JUNIPER:

I'm not sure if we went this way already...

MAGNOLIA:

You're the one who is supposed to know this area, Juniper.

JUNIPER:

I never said I knew it! I said I knew how to find it.

MAGNOLIA:

This is ridiculous. Why are we even chasing this stupid Star Thief anyway?

JUNIPER:

To save our hollow!

MAGNOLIA:

Yeah. Like a mouse and a mole could ever be heroes...

JUNIPER:

We have to try.

MAGNOLIA:

Why!?

JUNIPER:

If not for us then for our families and friends.

MAGNOLIA:

Well, I shouldn't have said I would go in the first place. I shouldn't have gotten their hopes up. I'm going back.

JUNIPER:

You can't go back! We are so close!

MAGNOLIA:

For all you know we may not even be in Nocturne's Hollow anymore! Or we're all the way back to where we started and we did all of this for nothing!

JUNIPER:

I believe that we can find this Star Thief and restore the hollow to its former glory!

MAGNOLIA:

Former glory? Who even are you right now?

JUNIPER:

I just mean -

MAGNOLIA:

I know what you mean. You go on without me if you want, I can't stop you. But I'm tired and I want to go home.

JUNIPER:

Magnolia!

(Suddenly there is a loud growl.
 The roots shake and figures can be seen in the shadows.
 CREATURES begin to surround them.
 They scream and begin to run.
 They run and run until they hear the tinkling of bells.
 JUNIPER stops short, causing MAGNOLIA to run into him.)

MAGNOLIA:

Why did you stop? We have to run!

JUNIPER:

Listen...

(The bell tinkles again.)

MAGNOLIA:

Bells...

BOTH:

The Star Thief.

(Blackout.
 Lights return on a little hideaway.
 There is a hammock off to the side and a table where there are three jars.
 Each with a glowing ball inside: the stars.
 The STAR THIEF enters; a young arctic fox.
 He repositions the jars until he is satisfied and then lays in the hammock,
 Playing a ukulele.)

STAR THIEF:

*I swing from the branches
 I hide in the trees
 My stars they a-dance
 Like songs on the breeze*

*I take what I wish
 From skies near and far
 And that's why they call me
 The Thief of the Stars*

Hmm...needs a bit of work. Ah well.

(The STAR THIEF grabs a bowl and heads for the woods.
Rustling can be heard as MAGNOLIA and JUNIPER enter slowly,
taking a moment to adjust to the light.)

MAGNOLIA:

Wow...

JUNIPER:

This must be the Star Thief's hideout.

MAGNOLIA:

Look! These must be the stars!

(She picks up a jar.
It jingles.)

Do you hear that?

JUNIPER:

It's coming from the jar?

MAGNOLIA:

It's so bright and loud here... How has the Star Thief never been caught?

STAR THIEF (entering):

Because nobody's ever been brave enough to go this far into Nocturne's Hollow before,
and anything that lives in the dark hates the light.

(MAGNOLIA and JUNIPER scream.
The STAR THIEF screams back, less in fear, more in retaliation.
They all stare each other down.)

That sound, by the way, is coming from the stars.

MAGNOLIA:

Huh?

STAR THIEF:

When you take stars from the sky they jingle. I'm not sure why, but still, I like it.

JUNIPER:

So that means you're the –

STAR THIEF:

Star Thief. Yup. You caught me. Take me away! Show no mercy!

(Beat.)

I'm kidding. Want some tea?

(They both nod.)

Great. I'll put the kettle on.

MAGNOLIA:

Not to be rude, but, um, you're nicer than I thought you'd be.

STAR THIEF:

What? Because all thieves have to be evil and sneaky?

JUNIPER:

Uhh -

STAR THIEF:

Don't worry. That's not me.

JUNIPER:

Then why - ?

STAR THIEF:

All in good time, friends. Sorry, what were your names?

MAGNOLIA:

Oh! Um...Magnolia. And this is Juniper.

JUNIPER:

Hello.

STAR THIEF:

Pleased to make your acquaintance.

MAGNOLIA:

Do you have a name?

STAR THIEF:

I do, but I don't tell people. It's hard to be secretive when everyone knows who you are.

MAGNOLIA:

I suppose that makes sense...

(The kettle whistles.
The STAR THIEF pours them all some tea.)

JUNIPER:

Is there anything you can tell us about yourself?

STAR THIEF:

I'm from far away on the backside of a crooked mountain.

MAGNOLIA:

Sounds beautiful.

STAR THIEF:

Well, it would have been, had I been able to see any of it.

JUNIPER:

You were blind?

STAR THIEF:

Sort of. You see, there was never any light there. I was born in total darkness.

MAGNOLIA and JUNIPER:

Ooooh...

STAR THIEF:

It was all I knew. Not until I discovered the world beyond the mountain was it no longer ok to live that way.

MAGNOLIA:

What happened?

STAR THIEF:

Well, it was all fine until I had to go to the edge of the mountain to get food. It had been a rough winter and we had to venture out further and further away from our village so that we could eat.

MAGNOLIA:

The same thing happened to us.

STAR THIEF:

One day I was out gathering food when I came to the edge of the mountain and saw something very strange. I was scared at first, but I took a step, and immediately felt the warmth and happiness of the light. It was wonderful. I ran back to my village to tell everyone, but nobody wanted to leave the mountain. I wondered if I could gather the light and bring it back with me, but I didn't know how so I spoke to the old Conjuror on the edge of the village. She told me of a way to bring light back to the village, but that only the bravest could do it. The heroes. I fancied myself a brave person, and always wanted to be a hero. She told me of a way to scoop the stars out of the sky and use them to light the dark parts of the earth. She gave me this.

(He holds out a silver ladle.)

It looks just like an ordinary ladle for making soup, doesn't it?

(They nod.)

Well, she said that it is perfect for gathering stars. So I was off.

JUNIPER:

But what made you choose *our* hollow?

STAR THIEF:

That was where I saw the light in the first place. It seemed like fate.

MAGNOLIA:

But why didn't you just go right back to your mountain?

STAR THIEF:

I've been collecting food to bring back home since I retrieved the stars; that is what brought me here in the first place. I didn't think anyone lived here, though! Honestly, I thought it was abandoned.

JUNIPER:

Everyone that lived in this part of the forest lived underground.

STAR THIEF:

Underground?

JUNIPER:

Moles like me. Watch.

(He walks over to a tree, takes a step, then disappears.
The STAR THIEF jumps.)

STAR THIEF:

Oh! He disappeared!

JUNIPER:

(Resurfacing)

I'm fine! It's an entrance to a mole cavern. It kept us safe from the creatures while we were looking for you.

STAR THIEF:

Creatures? What do you mean?

MAGNOLIA:

They are creatures of the dark. They live in the shadows and attack anyone who dares to venture into their territory.

JUNIPER:

Like us.

STAR THIEF:

I had no idea...

MAGNOLIA:

Well you're safe. You have the light from our stars and you can navigate in the dark.

STAR THIEF:

If I had known - I'm so sorry.

JUNIPER:

I'm so glad you're not evil.

STAR THIEF:

(Chuckling)

Thanks. But what do we do now?

MAGNOLIA:

I don't suppose there is any way you can give us back our stars?

STAR THIEF:

I'd really love to, but I can't go back home empty handed...and even if I find another star I don't know how to put these ones back.

JUNIPER:

There must be a way...

MAGNOLIA:

Wait! What about the - the person? In your village?

STAR THIEF:

The Conjuror?

MAGNOLIA:

Right! She probably knows what to do!

STAR THIEF:

Of course! It's not too far. Just let me pack my things and we'll go.

(He begins to pack his things.
Suddenly there is a low, frightening growl.
They all freeze.)

STAR THIEF:

What was that?

JUNIPER:

Creatures.

STAR THIEF:

I thought you said that they don't come in the light?

MAGNOLIA:

They know we're going to leave here soon...

STAR THIEF:

Well, what do we do?

JUNIPER:

Follow me!

(He runs over to the tree and disappears again.
The growling continues to get louder.)

MAGNOLIA:

Come on! We have to run!

STAR THIEF:

I can't!

MAGNOLIA:

Yes you can, it'll be ok. Here,

(She extends her hand.)

Trust me.

STAR THIEF:

Ok...

(The STAR THIEF takes MAGNOLIA's hand.
They run and jump into the hole and the lights go out.
Lights are low around MAGNOLIA, JUNIPER, and the STAR THIEF.)

MAGNOLIA:

What do we do now?

JUNIPER:

I'm pretty sure that this tunnel must lead to the edge of the woods, but I have never been there.

STAR THIEF:

I have. I can take us to my village from there.

MAGNOLIA:

But are there any stars along the way that you can have?

JUNIPER:

There must be at least one.

STAR THIEF:

That's all I need.

MAGNOLIA:

How far away is your mountain?

STAR THIEF:

Not far at all. I'm pretty sure we should be there any minute now.

JUNIPER:

(Stops and sniffs.)

I smell cold.

STAR THIEF:

Sounds like my mountain.

JUNIPER:

I'll check.

MAGNOLIA:

But - !

JUNIPER:

Don't worry. I've got this.

(He moves out of sight for a moment before he yells.)

Oh my goodness! Guys! Get up here, quick!

(MAGNOLIA and the STAR THIEF run after him.)

MAGNOLIA (Off):

What's wrong?

STAR THIEF (Off):

What happened?

JUNIPER (Off):

Stars!

(They enter into a bright night's sky.
The three of them stand in awe for a moment.)

MAGNOLIA:

I'd forgotten...

JUNIPER:

So had I.

MAGNOLIA:

It's like the sky is smiling down on us.

STAR THIEF:

Star shine, star shine, where can you be?

JUNIPER:

Is that a song?

STAR THIEF:

It's from a rhyme my mother used to say when I was little. It always made me feel better.

MAGNOLIA:

How does it go?

STAR THIEF:

*Star shine, star shine, where can you be?
I need starlight watching over me.
Shine in the dark, shine in the haze,
Shine on me on my murkiest days.
Keep me safe throughout the night
Until you bring the morning light.*

It's just silly...

MAGNOLIA:

No, it's nice. I wish I knew a rhyme like that.

STAR THIEF:

Yeah...my grandmother made it up one day to make my mother feel better when she was sick. Then my mother told it to me to make me feel better when I was sick. I miss my mother...

JUNIPER:

Me, too. I miss her ginger root tea and being tucked in.

MAGNOLIA:

I miss my mother's songs...she always sang to us before bed.

STAR THIEF:

Well, we'll soon be with them again. We just need one more star.

JUNIPER:

But there are no other stars here that people don't need! What are we going to do?

STAR THIEF:

I can't go home without a star, and I know I can't have yours...

JUNIPER:

We're stuck...

(MAGNOLIA looks up sadly, and sings.)

MAGNOLIA:

*Star shine, star shine, where can you be?
I need starlight watching over me.
Shine on my home, shine on my hollow
Shine on the path that we have to follow
Keep us safe throughout the night
Bring us to your beautiful light.*

(Suddenly she realizes something:

She looks back up, and jumps up, startling JUNIPER and the STAR THIEF.)

MAGNOLIA:

Hey!

STAR THIEF:

What, what?!

JUNIPER:

What's wrong!?

MAGNOLIA:

Look up!

(They do.)

Don't you see? Right above this abandoned field there's a star! A lonely little star! It has nobody to light!

JUNIPER:

How do we get it?

STAR THIEF:

With this!

(He takes out the ladle.)

STAR THIEF (contd.):

Give me a boost.

(MAGNOLIA and JUNIPER help him into a tree.
He reaches out the ladle and scoops out the star.
It begins to jingle loudly.)

Quick! Grab a jar out of my bag.

(JUNIPER grabs a jar and hands it to the STAR THIEF.
He puts the star in the jar and climbs down.)

MAGNOLIA:

We got it!

JUNIPER:

We can go home!

STAR THIEF:

Almost. First you'll have to come to my village so we can get your stars back to where they belong. We'll talk to the conjurer. I'm sure she can help us.

(TRAVELLING MONTAGE:

Music plays, lights dance and CREATURES move scenery to become a cold, snowy mountain.

They leave and an old, rickety hut is revealed.

Before they can knock on the door the CONJURER calls from within.)

CONJURER (off):

Ember, is that you?

EMBER:

It is. I made it home.

CONJURER:

Come in. Bring your friends.

MAGNOLIA:

Ember?

EMBER:

Yeah, uh...that's my real name. Guess the secret is out.

JUNIPER:

Well, I like it. And you aren't a thief anymore, so there you go!

EMBER:

I guess that's true.

CONJURER:

Come in, come in, you're letting the heat out!

(They enter the hut.)

EMBER:

Right! Sorry.

CONJURER:

Well? Aren't you going to introduce me to Juniper and Magnolia?

MAGNOLIA:

How did you - ?

CONJURER:

I saw you coming, my dears. Old Conjuror's trick.

JUNIPER:

Whoa...

CONJURER:

Tsk, tsk - It seems you have underestimated your true value, my dears.

MAGNOLIA:

What do you mean?

JUNIPER:

(to EMBER.)

What does she mean?

CONJURER:

Later, later. Now! My dear Ember, I can see that you have something for me?

EMBER:

Oh!

(He pulls out a jar with the newest star and hands it to her.)

For our village.

CONJURER:

Aah. You have done so well. This one is perfect. It seems to have fallen out of place, anyhow.

MAGNOLIA:

What do you mean?

CONJURER:

Just like us, stars can get lost, too. This one was supposed to be ours, but it strayed from its path a little. Didn't you, you naughty star. Yes you did.

(She playfully pokes at the jar and the star jingles.)

So you, my dear, have brought our rightful star back home.

EMBER:

Wow, really?

CONJURER:

Magic, my dear grandson, is in everything. Sometimes you just have to look extra hard.

JUNIPER & MAGNOLIA:

Grandson!?

EMBER:

Did I not mention that?

JUNIPER & MAGNOLIA:

NO!

EMBER:

All part of the secret, I guess.

(They gawk at him.)

CONJURER:

Ember has always been a bit secretive, haven't you?

(He tugs at his ears in embarrassment.)

Well. Seems about time to get this star back up where it belongs, don't you think?

EMBER:

There's just one more thing. I, uh, accidentally took these before I knew what they were.

(He produces the jar with Orion's Belt.)

Is there any way I can put them back?

CONJURER:

Of course you can, my dear. There is always a way to put things right.

EMBER:

Really?

CONJURER:

Of course. All you must do is go back to the place where you took the stars, whisper a simple spell, and throw them back. They'll find their way as long as you're close.

MAGNOLIA:

Um, excuse me, but if it's all right I'd like to take them.

CONJURER:

Ah yes! You promised to find a hero who will light your home?

MAGNOLIA:

How - ?

(The CONJURER taps her head.)

Right. Well, yes. I did.

CONJURER:

Very well then, my dear.

(She hands MAGNOLIA the jars.

She beckons for her to lean in and whispers in her ear.)

Can you remember that?

MAGNOLIA:

Of course.

CONJURER:

Give that spell to your hero and you'll have light back soon.

JUNIPER:

And I'll be there to help, Magnolia, you know I will.

MAGNOLIA:

Thanks, Juniper.

EMBER:

I guess this is goodbye.

MAGNOLIA:

Oh, only for now.

JUNIPER:

Yeah! We'll be able to find you soon.

EMBER:

Ditto.

(They all hug.)

JUNIPER:

We're going to miss you.

EMBER:

I'll come visit, I promise.

CONJURER:

Go on, young ones. You have a hollow to light.

(Soon JUNIPER and MAGNOLIA are on the dark road again.)

JUNIPER:

Just a little while longer and we'll be there, Magnolia.

MAGNOLIA:

If this works our families will come home. We'll all be together again.

JUNIPER:

If it works...

MAGNOLIA:

Yeah...I mean I told my brother and sister I could do this for us, for our family, but part of me didn't really think I could.

JUNIPER:

Then why did you do it?

MAGNOLIA:

I guess I just didn't want to let my fear win. And I might have if I hadn't met you -

JUNIPER:

I've never been brave before, but now because of you - well, I think we needed each other for this.

MAGNOLIA:

Yeah, I think we did.

JUNIPER:

Ok. We're here. You ready?

MAGNOLIA:

As ready as I'll ever be.

JUNIPER:

Then let's do this.

(They exit the tunnel and head up to the surface.)

JUNIPER:

So how do we find a hero?

MAGNOLIA:

I'm not sure. Hello? Is anyone there? Help me into the tree, maybe I can see better.

(JUNIPER begins to help her into the tree when they hear a growl.)

JUNIPER:

What was that?

(CREATURES come out and begin to surround them.)

MAGNOLIA:

Up there!

(They scramble up into the tree.
The CREATURES try to follow them.)

JUNIPER:

Hurry, hurry!

MAGNOLIA:

I'm going as fast as I can!

(She grabs for the mason jar as JUNIPER tries to fend off the CREATURES.)

JUNIPER:

What do we do?!

MAGNOLIA:

I don't know, I -

(Suddenly she takes the jar and twists the lid.)

JUNIPER:

What are you doing?

(She takes his hand.)

MAGNOLIA:

Come on.

(She whispers the spell in his ear and he understands.
They pull the stars out of the jar and suddenly everything stops.
They softly sing a tune without words while music underscores them.
The stars light up the whole sky until everything is bright and full of color.
They come down from the tree and bask in the light.
What were once CREATURES come out and celebrate with them.
The lights slowly fade on the joyful setting.)

CURTAIN CALL:

*The sun is shining clear and bright
The stars will sparkle every night
The moon will sing good night to all
The trees will dance and leaves will fall*

*We welcome the stars, we welcome the sun
Our hollow is safe from the darkness again*

*The seasons pass from day to day
The long night has been blown away
Our hearts are full, our minds are clear*

Our will is strong, our home is here

*We welcome the stars, we welcome the sun
Our hollow is safe from the darkness again*

*We welcome the stars, we welcome the sun
Our hollow is safe from the darkness again*