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Sky Diamonds

Materials

Styrofoam™ cup
sharp pencil
flashlight

Instructions

Using the sharp point of the pencil, poke holes in the bottom of the cup. At the end of the story, darken the room, turn the cup upside down, place the flashlight inside and turn it on. The light filtering through the holes will produce a star-filled sky upon the ceiling.

Discussion

What are stars?

What's the difference between a star and a planet?

Why are stars invisible during the day?



Sky Diamonds

Many, many years ago, when the nights were pitch dark and the moon traveled alone in the sky, there lived a young girl named Julia. Julia and her father were poor. So poor, their only possessions were a two-room shack, and a few bits of potatoes to make a soup.

One day while Julia was out hunting berries to eat, she heard voices nearby. Three men approached, talking louder and boasting. She knew right away they were robbers, so she quickly hid in the bushes and stayed as quiet as a frightened mouse. The men were so close, she could smell their sweat and grime.

"We pulled that one off, didn't we?" said one.

"Yes, but we'll have to lay low for a while. And no bragging in town!" said another.

Julia heard them shuffling and digging near the bush where she was hiding. She held her breath with fear. Then one of the men spoke. "We'll keep it buried here for a few days, then dig it up when we won't be suspected." Moments later, she heard them laughing and riding away.

Julia stayed hidden until she knew it was absolutely safe to come out. And although the robbers had tried to cover the hole with grass and leaves, she could tell where they'd been digging. She grabbed a stick and dug into the ground.

That's when she found a small box. She brushed off the dirt and opened it. She gasped when she saw it was full of glittering white diamonds!

Tucking the box into her apron pocket, Julia rushed home to show her father. "Papa, we're rich!" she cried, bursting through the rickety door.

"What?" her father asked.

Julia didn't answer. Instead she poured the diamonds out onto the table. "We're rich!"

Her father's eyes grew big and reflected the sparkles from the diamonds. "Where did you get these?" he asked, his mouth gaping.

"I found them," Julia answered.



Her father swept them up into his hands, and rolled them from palm to palm. "They're exquisite!"

"Isn't this wonderful, Papa? Now we can buy all the nice things we need and plenty to eat."

"Hmmm," he answered, never looking up. He put them back into the box and tucked them into his shirt.

Julia danced about the rest of the day, happy that their hard times were over.

The next morning she woke up to see her father sitting near the window, staring at the diamonds. He looked as though he hadn't slept all night.

"Papa, are you going to sell the diamonds today?" she asked.

"Hmmm," he answered.

Julia found some chamomile leaves and brewed a bitter tea. She didn't mind. Soon she'd be feasting on roast duck, spiced peaches and fine-grain bread.

But all that day, Papa just sat, staring at the diamonds and rolling them in his hands.

"Are you going to sell the diamonds today?" Julia asked the next morning, worrying as she saw the dark circles under her father's eyes.

"Hmmm."

"I'm hungry, Papa. Let's sell them today."

"I'll sell them when I'm ready!" he snapped. He poured them back into the box, and tucked them safely in his shirt.

That day rolled into the next . . . and the next . . . and the next. Julia scrounged for food, wondering why Papa only admired the diamonds instead of selling them. And his looks were beginning to change. His face had thinned, leaving dark shadows on his sunken cheeks. His mouth had twisted into a grimace. And his eyes had grown dull, the only glimmer Julia could see was the reflection of the diamonds he held close. She worried.

"Papa, today would be a good day to sell the diamonds, don't you think? We could have so much."

"What!" Papa roared, sounding more like one of the robbers than her father. "Sell my diamonds? Never!"

"But Papa, we have nothing to eat."

