

HOPE THE FIREFLY
By Cindy Taft

Hope was a little firefly who lived in a deep, dark forest. She loved flying through the trees, blinking her golden light, and listening to the sounds of the night. One evening, a frightened little voice caught her attention.

“I hope I can find my way home,” cried Billy the Beetle. “I’m scared.”

Hope flew down to the forest floor where she saw a small, green beetle sitting on a maple leaf. “Did someone call me?” she asked. “My name is Hope.”

The tiny beetle saw a beautiful beam shining before him.

“I’m Billy and I can’t see my way home,” he said. “Will you help me?”

“Of course I’ll help you,” said Hope. “You give me directions and I’ll light the way.”

“I live two pine trees that way,” said Billy, pointing down a misty, shadowy path. Hope flew slowly in front of him, her light scattering Billy’s fears and warming his heart.

Later that night, Hope was flying on a gentle breeze, her light winking in the darkness. As she flew lower, she heard a faint, little voice.

“I hope I can get this food to the hill,” said an old ant named Abby. “It gets harder every day to find my way.”

Hope hovered beside the ant, glowing softly. “Did someone call me?” she asked. “I’m Hope. Can I help?”

The tired ant looked up at the graceful little bug floating next to her.

“How kind of you to stop. My name is Abby. I’ve got to get this food to my sick grandson. The ant hill is about two yards around that bend.” Hope looked down a damp, mossy trail that curved around an old tree stump and disappeared into the woods.

“I would be happy to help,” replied Hope, picking up a pine seed and flying slowly down the trail. The two worked their way along the newly lit path, and the love shown by Hope lifted Abby’s spirit and lightened her load.

Hope flew higher into the air, hoping Abby’s grandson would feel better soon. She hummed a little song to herself as she flew around a small cedar tree. As she rounded the corner, she didn’t have time to stop or swerve. Right in front of her was a

large spider web. Hope landed right in the middle of it. Fear hit her as she struggled to break free.

Time passed as she hung helpless in the web. Then she saw it – a large black and yellow spider. Hope held her breathe. The spider came closer.

“Well, what do we have here? A tasty treat for a snack or something delicious for my dinner?” The spider seemed to be squinting as it stared at Hope with its eight black eyes. “Can’t see a thing without my glasses. Where did I put them?” The spider reached into her apron pocket and pulled out a huge pair of spectacles.

“There, that’s better. Now, let me have a closer look at you. Why, you’re a firefly! You wouldn’t by any chance be Hope, would you?” asked the friendly spider.

“Yes, I am. Who are you and how do you know my name?”

“My name’s Grace. I just had a visit with my old friend, Abby. She told me about a wonderful little firefly that helped her reach the colony tonight. What a nice thing to do!”

“Thank you,” replied Hope.

“Very sorry about the web. I’ll have you out in a jiffy.”

Grace soon had Hope free from the tangled web. It felt good to be able to fly again. Hope thanked Grace and set her course for home.

On her way, Hope found herself in an unfamiliar part of the forest. It seemed so gloomy and lifeless, until a small voice drifted up from below.

“I hope we can see our music tonight,” chirped Katie the Cricket to the cricket orchestra. “We’ve practiced a long time, but we may have to cancel the concert.”

Hope fluttered down and landed on a dewy blade of grass. “Did someone call?” she asked. “My name is Hope. What’s wrong?”

Katie and the others looked at Hope.

“We have a concert tonight,” replied Katie, “but without the moonlight, we won’t be able to see our music. Could you help us?”

Hope thought for a minute. “Yes, I think I can” she replied. At that moment, Hope recognized a small ray of light dancing among the tall trees. “It’s Flora!” yelled Hope. Drifting down softly, Hope’s best friend landed gently in the cool grass.

“Hope, what are you doing so far from home?” Flora asked.

“Helping some friends,” replied Hope. “I’m glad you’re here. We need to signal our families.”

Hope and Flora flew side by side, their lights flashing as one. The dazzling glow carried deep into the woods and a hundred glittering fireflies came gliding into the thicket. Soon the forest was filled with the most magnificent light the crickets had ever seen.

“Will this help?” asked Hope.

“It’s wonderful!” replied Katie, “and just in time. Here comes our audience.” As the crickets began to play, enchanting music filled the air, inspiring everyone in the forest.

That night, Hope became a beacon, a guiding light for all to see and all the night creatures realized, if you can find Hope, anything is possible.
