

## ***The Origin of Stars***

Long ago, no light shone in the night sky.

In the woods near the river lived a fisherwoman named Sara. Everyday she cast her nets into the river for fish to eat and sell in the village market. Every night she mended her nets. Sometimes in the night, fireflies would swarm to her. They knew what Sara feared most and whispered her fears into her ears.

Barucha was a woman full of years. She loved Sara and saw her everyday at the market where Sara sold her fish. When Sara did not come to sell fish for many days, Barucha went to the river to find her. When she arrived, she found Sara exhausted, hungry and ill. Sara told her about the firefly visits. She told her that they came to whisper her fears in her ears and shine their lights in her eyes. Lately they had come so often she was unable to sleep. Without rest, Sara was not strong enough to catch the fish she needed to survive.

Barucha told Sara about a power available to her. She said that this power was one that was given to those who have great strength and wisdom. Then Barucha tapped her on the shoulders and beautiful, brightly colored wings slowly unfurled from Sara's shoulders.

But Sara was weary and had no strength to use the wings. So Barucha stayed and fed her warm stew and cradled her as slept.

Sara became stronger and gained confidence with her wings. At first, she was clumsy and frustrated. But she focused on Barucha's words telling her that this power belonged to those with great strength and wisdom. She continued to practice until she could rise above the trees and see the river stretching out through the woods. Soon she was able to use her new power of flight upon command.

One night when the fireflies came back, Sara knew that she must use her new power to rid her life of these fireflies and fears. She gathered her fishing nets and called out the name of each of her fears. As she did, the firefly that held that fear would fly to her. Sara caught each one and trapped them in her nets. When her nets were full, she unfurled her wings and flew into the sky. She flew higher and higher into the blackness until she was alone, completely alone, with only her net of fears.

In that great black sky, Sara opened her net. Once again, she called out each firefly by name. As each firefly came out Sara cast it into the night sky where it burned brightly with fire at being deprived of its closeness with Sara. When all the fireflies were cast into the sky, she flew back to the woods without this burden. As she landed on the ground, she looked into the night sky to find that the fireflies lit up the night.

She slept well and woke refreshed and cast her nets into the river once again.