

The Fairie's Gift

a traditional folktale from Ireland
as told by Mary Alice Amidon

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a woodcutter who lived in a small cottage on the edge of a forest. He lived with his wife, and with his mother and father. Now he and his wife had so wanted to have a child, but year after year went by and still, no baby came.

*I wish for a child, I wish for a child,
I wish for a child of our own,
A boy or a girl, a girl or a boy,
I wish for a child of our own.*

If that wasn't hard enough for the woodcutter, the woodcutter's mother, in her old age, had gone blind. When she was young, she could see as well as you or I, but now all she could do was sit and rock by the fire, and all she could see was darkness.

*I wish for sight, I wish for sight,
I wish for sight for my eyes,
So I can see the flowers and the trees,
I wish for sight for my eyes.*

Many times the cupboards were bare, and there wasn't enough food to eat, and in the winter it was so cold in that little cottage, and they wished many times for money and gold to have all that they needed.

*I wish for gold, I wish for gold,
Gold for all that we need,
So we can be happy and free,
I wish for gold, for gold.*

Every day the woodcutter would go out into the forest. He would take his ax, chop down the trees, and tie the logs he gathered into bundles, and sell them in the marketplace.

One day the woodcutter went out and he took a little rest. He leaned on his ax and looked up in the sky. And there he saw a hawk circling around, looking for something to eat. The woodcutter looked down on the ground to see what it was, and there he saw a little fairie man no bigger than the size of his hand. The fairie man had on a brown jacket and a brown hat, and he was running to hide under that log. Now the woodcutter's mother had told him all about the fairies. She liked the fairies very much. And so to help the fairie

out, he took a stone and he threw it up in the sky, and that hawk flew away.

The fairie man came out from underneath the log. He said “Oh, thank you very much, you have helped me. I would like to give you a gift, as a present, in thanks.” And he reached into his pocket, and the fairie took out the one thing he had to give: it was a wish. He put the wish in the woodcutter’s hand, and it sparkled and glowed. And the woodcutter felt all warm and tingly inside. When he saw that wish he began to think: “Think of the places I could go, think of all the food I could eat,” and his mind began imagining all the beautiful places he could travel to, until he remembered his family sitting home around the table with hardly any food to eat. He said, “No, I must go home now and share this story with my family.”

And so he went back home. He gathered them all around, and he told them of the fairie and the gift of the wish. It was his wife who spoke up first:

Now husband don’t you see, now we can have the baby we’ve been waiting for; wish for a child.

*Wish for a child, I wish for a child,
Wish for a child of our own,
A boy or a girl, a girl or a boy,
Wish for a child of our own.*

Of course! That’s what the woodcutter should have thought of in the first place. He was just about to make that wish when his mother spoke up:

“Now son, I knew the fairies and they knew me. Why, they wouldn’t want me to be blind to the end of my days. Why it’s been years since I’ve seen the sun rise and the sun set. I barely remember what you look like. You must wish for my sight.”

*Wish for sight, I wish for sight,
Wish for sight for my eyes,
So I can see the flowers and the trees,
Wish for sight for my eyes.*

Oh yes, his mother. She had always been so kind and so loving to him as he was growing up. She told him wonderful stories. Of course he should wish for her sight, and he was about to make that wish, when his father, who hardly ever said a word, spoke up:

“No son, many years go by with us living here and it is so cold we are freezing to death. and there is hardly enough food to last. You must wish for gold so we can have all the

things that we need.

*Wish for gold, wish for gold,
Gold for all that we need,
So we can be happy and free,
I wish for gold, for gold.*

Oh! Now this wish was becoming a problem. What should he do? The woodcutter stood up. He walked out the front door of that little cottage and began walking into the forest. He walked and he walked. He walked all day farther into the forest. He walked till it was dark, and the stars and the moon came out. He sat down. He looked up in the sky, and there he saw a shooting star fall from the sky. And he knew what the wish would be.

He went home as fast as he could, he called his family around. He said, "I'm ready to make the wish." His wife though, "Oh, now we'll have a baby." His mother thought, "Oh, surely he'll wish for my sight." And what did his father want? Gold!

The woodcutter raised his hand. He said, "The wish is this: I wish that my mother could see our baby lying in a cradle of gold."

And with that one wish all their wishes came true.

The End

Fairie's Gift Songs

by Mary Alice Amidon ©2004



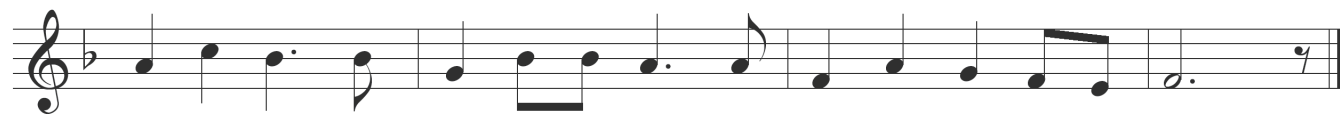
I wish for a child, I wish for a child, I wish for a child of my own A



boy or a girl, a girl or a boy, I wish for a child of my own.



I wish for sight, I wish for sight, I wish for sight for my eyes, So



I can see the flow'rs and the trees, I wish for sight for my eyes.



I wish for gold, I wish for gold, gold for all that we need



so we can be hap - py and free, I wish for gold, for gold.