

For my mother, Lee Sturtevant,
who always provided me with the very best books—
and with anything else I wanted to read

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At the Sign of the Star

A Classic for the Year of Choice 2007

I was the poorest child in the school, the only one in the class
I was ever embarrassed to bring to school, the only one who
wasn't invited to the school dances, the only one who wasn't
allowed to wear the best dresses or the prettiest shoes. I was
just a poor little girl with a father who was a bookseller and
a mother who was a seamstress. I was the only child in the
school who wasn't invited to the school dances, the only one
who wasn't allowed to wear the best dresses or the prettiest
shoes. I was just a poor little girl with a father who was a
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