



## Lake Tahoe

There was a girl, who lived in California, and her name was Emily Lee Mueller. She took her mother's Chinese name, Lee, and her father's German name, Mueller. Emily had curly hair and a lovely smile. Her eyes were dark, and her hair was blond.

One winter, Emily's parents took her to Lake Tahoe for a vacation. After a long drive through the mountains, Emily asked, "Mom, are we there yet?" She really couldn't wait!

"Almost," Mom said.

A few minutes later, the car stopped in front of a cabin. Emily saw Dad was about to get out of the driver's seat. She immediately opened the back-seat door, grabbed Dad's hand, and pulled him out.

Emily gazed at the stars. "It's beautiful," she said. It was late, and the sky was already jet black and full of twinkling stars.

"Dad, will it snow?" Emily asked.

"They said it would snow tonight. Who knows—we might see snow when we wake up." Dad opened the cabin's front door, and they entered.



Emily woke to the warm smell of freshly baked brötchen (German bread rolls). She jumped out of bed and hurried to peek out the window. There was snow everywhere! The ground looked like a thick, soft white carpet.

Emily broke a bread roll, stuffed the bread in her mouth, and almost choked on it. She couldn't wait to get out the door!

Emily was about to open the front door, but Mom caught up with her. "Where are you going, munchkin?" Mom took off her apron and handed Emily a red wool hat. "Put this on and don't lose it, all right?"

"I promise." Emily grabbed the hat and ran outside.

But when Mom looked out the window a moment later, that red hat had already disappeared in the snow.

As Emily walked through the woods, she could hear the snow crunching underfoot. The forest had tall and handsome trees, and the snow made the branches look heavy and happy.

Emily stopped at one tree. Unlike other trees, this one looked ancient and mysterious. She felt the tree was telling an old tale on this quiet winter day. Then she saw a red raindrop shape carved out of the huge tree trunk.

