

The biscuit did the trick

I used to be a changeling. Like the other changelings, I lived in darkness and secret for about 100 years until I became a human again - until I changed lives with Henry Day, a seven-year old child.

On a summer afternoon, Henry Day ran away from home and hid in a hollow tree. We kidnapped him and then I transformed myself to become exactly like him. I slipped into the hollow tree to change my life for his.

A group of firemen were looking for Henry. They were proud and happy to find me that night. They carried me out of the woods to a road where a fire truck was waiting and then took me home to Henry's parents, my new father and mother.

When we arrived, Henry's father took me in his arms. The mother had been crying. She took me with trembling hands and kissed me. Then she began laughing.

"Henry? Henry? Let me look at you. Is it really you?"

"I'm sorry, Mom."

She pulled me against her to kiss me again. She was so happy!

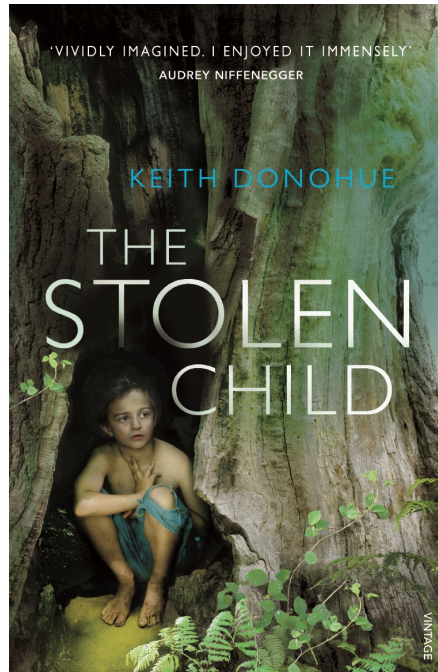
"Don't worry, my little treasure. You're home and safe. You've come back to me."

I took out the handkerchief from Henry's pocket. Crumbs spilled to the floor.

"I'm sorry I stole the biscuit, Mom."

She laughed. Maybe she had been wondering if I was indeed her child, but mentioning the biscuit did the trick. Henry had stolen one from the table when he ran away from home. The crumbs proved that I was hers.

Adapted from Keith Donohue, *The Stolen Child*, 2006.



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