

The Fire Fairies

and the night of the Original Light

■ Kurt Guenther
www.bedtime.com



A cornflower blue sky deepened around brother and sister as they sat by their small campfire. He was six, she was ten. Each was cozy and drowsy after a day of walking high in the mountains with their parents.

“Tell me a story,” the boy said to his sister for the second time, his eyes now closing. “Your turn,”

she whispered again, the long trail and thin air catching up to her now.

And together, they fell silent. The only sound in the air now the crackle of the fire and the gentle clinking of parents washing pots from dinner, just out of sight.

Then suddenly, a spark caught the boy's eye. He nudged his sister awake. The sky was black and something was in the fire. Like the shimmer of crystal. Fiery, magical shimmers of color streaked through the yellow fire.

Neither child spoke for a very long time. Then the girl said, "It's like dancing...."

"And dancing we are!" shot back a voice from the fire. From the fire? It was a voice in only the strangest sense of the word. High and thin, like the squeal of pitch escaping from a burning log.

The children were amazed, but not afraid. This dancing light, this tiny voice filled them with something just short of giggles but twice as deep. "What is in our fire?" the girl asked, at last. "Are you alive?"

"As alive as every flame that licks the forest with its hot, tongue and awakens the val-

ley with its burning howl!" screeched the voice, through the crackling. "That sounds scary." said the boy.

"They're children. Remember children carry the Original Light," another fiery voice called out, deeper and stronger than the first. "They are young, like you." The voice added.

For a long time, there was no other sound but the snap and spit of the logs. No other light than the flame and embers they has seen on so many trips to the mountains.

Then, just as the boy and girl began to nod off once more, it happened. Spectacular fountains of colored light rose and swirled above

the fire, which had become larger now. On every log, the yellow flame was separating into many more brilliant lights, swaying, leaping, swirling, their shapes becoming like dancers.

The girl and boy looked at each other in delight. How was it that at this moment, on this mountain, in the deep of black night, that they were watching such wonder?

"I can tell by your eyes we're the first you have seen," the lower voice sighed warmly from the fire. "The first! The first! Let us show them, then, the glory of the Fire Fairies!" squealed the smaller voice. And the sky became a theater of exquisite light and color.

The boy, who had sometimes feared the dark, exclaimed to his sister, how splendid and joyful to be surrounded in this way. The girl wondered aloud, where did these dancing lights come from and why were they here?

"The Original Light." Said the deeper voice, plainly. "You will lose it soon, my child, as all the people of flesh and bone do in time. Unless you learn how to tend it while you are still young enough to believe you need it.

Though she was only 10, the girl understood. Although it was hard to put it into words.

"Hard to put it into words, yes." agreed the deep voice, knowing her thoughts as she thought them. "But you must try, you see. And often that is at the heart of the tending."

Perhaps it was the night air or the excitement of this sublime discovery, but the girl suddenly spoke exactly what she thought. "The Original

Light is the place in me where the joyful things live...like hope and wonder and surprise and believing...like believing in this night." she said.

The boy, though six, was especially full of the Light, and so, young as he was, he spoke clearly of things that might confuse one much older. "The Original Light is my magic. And my power to see magic...like tooth fairies and Easter bunnies and Santa and other things."

"The Original Light," said the boy, with a smile that was missing two front teeth, "is the power to see the most wonderful things. Even when no one else can see them.

"Like...Martin Luther King."

"Interesting!" "Delightful"

"A dance for the boy!" sang many voices at once from the fire. "The original light is about believing."

"I know." Said the boy, so young he still slept with a large, stuffed tiger, even on trips to the mountain.

"I know." agreed the girl softly.

"You know." sang the fairies, now spreading so far across the sky that the boy wondered if others, if his parents, might be awoken by the light and color and strange song.

"You KNOW."

Sparkling, bursting rivers of fiery color filled the eyes of the boy and girl. Brother and sister. Side by side by the fire, this was nothing but a charred piece of log when the distant fire of the sun began a new day on the mountain.

And the boy and the girl sat up and yawned. And wiggled out of their sleeping bags and joined their parents for a breakfast of trout and strawberry bars. And they said absolutely nothing about the night before. About whether it was real. Or dreamt.

They knew.