



The Fire Bride

Fanni Sütő

Fable, Magic

On Midsummer's Night the war between light and darkness comes to a turning point. Light is winning and he tears off a piece from the cape of darkness with a sudden move. Through this rift fairies, will o' wisps, witches and other strange creatures flee to our world. Dreams merge with reality and it's not unusual that the tired wanderer sees a miracle on the verge of sleep and wakefulness.

The young man sighed and sat down next to the fire. Wind ruffled his hair and smoke tickled his eyelashes. He'd been on the road for years; fixing broken things, ridding fruit trees from their burden and entertaining children with cheap magic tricks. The lonely wandering and the dust of the road wore him off. The famous repairman could fix anything but himself. His young heart was rusty with loneliness and his bones crumbled from exhaustion.

A few years ago, on a fresh spring afternoon he found a little bird with broken wings. It was crying in the tall grass. The man reached out for her and to his great surprise the bird didn't try to escape.

"Come little one, I'll try to fix you," the man said.

The bird relaxed on his palm and let the human hand warm her.

Spring turned into summer and the bird left her pain behind. One day the man woke up to bird song from a branch above his head. The song filled the morning silence and the emptiness in his heart. From that day on the bird sang every day and the man slowly learn to smile again. But humans are frail. If happiness touches them, they reach after it with merciless hands. The wanderer didn't learn from old fairy tales. He built a cage. The bird accepted her new place without protest, but there was sadness in her eyes. From that day on she sang less and less. The first day of autumn took not only the green of leaves but also the soul of the bird.

The memory had been haunting him ever since. Guilt ticked in his soul even while sat by the fire years later. He wanted nothing but a companion, somebody to share the dust of the road and the light of the stars with. He sighed and with it all his wishes flew into the flames. Having got rid of his burdens, the man fell asleep.

In the dying flames a girl stretched her glowing limbs. Her hair was orange like the flames, her eyes midnight black with dancing blue spots. As the fire died away, her burning body cooled off. The man shuddered under his coat at the touch of the fireless night. The girl climbed out of the embers and lay next to him, embracing him, keeping him warm with her body made of fire and wishes.

At dawn the man woke up to the smell of smoky jasmine. He was only half surprised when he saw the girl slumbering next to him. She woke up from the touch of his gaze. There was no need for explanations. He named her Ember and she called him Dreamer. Ember promised him that she would stay with him as a faithful companion in his wanderings on one condition: Every night she needed to spend an hour alone in the forest. He couldn't come with her or follow her; she would go away, but always return if he didn't break his promise. Dreamer agreed eagerly, what was one little hour compared to the long years the girl was offering.

For a long time Ember's absence didn't bother Dreamer. She kept her word and returned to him every time. She even seemed more glowing and beautiful.

They lived happily for years. Ember never told Dreamer what she was doing in her lone hours, however hard he questioned her. The poison of curiosity and suspicion was boiling in Dreamer's heart. He brought up the topic more and more often and Ember repeated sadly that she could not tell him what she was doing. His distrust was hurting her. Doubts and suspicion changed Dreamer. He became irritable and he often shouted at Ember. She suffered in silence.

One day he couldn't hold back anymore. When the girl said it was time and she made her way towards the heart of the forest, he followed her. She settled on a clearing and built a small fire from branches and twigs. As the flames licked higher and higher, she took off her clothes and stepped into the fire. The flames embraced her softly, caressing her body, and her skin glowed with a golden light. At first Dreamer was awestruck by the sight, then anger filled his heart. "Witch!" he whispered. Ember heard him nonetheless and looked in the direction of his hiding place. Their eyes met; in his there was hatred in hers love and disappointment.

Ember shook her head sadly and closed her eyes. The next moment she was nothing but smoke. That moment Dreamer realized his mistake he and he rushed to the clearing. He grabbed for the flames in despair, searching for his lost love. He found nothing but the fire which bit his hand and gave him blisters. A repairman with a

burnt hand isn't much use to anyone, so hard times came for Dreamer. Some say that he still wanders the world, looking into every burning fire, hoping to find his lost love.

Read more fairy tales on Fairytalez.com