

# **FIRESIDE FANCIES**

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Fireside Fancies by Riddell

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**RIDDELL**

**FIRESIDE  
FANCIES**



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# FIRESIDE FANCIES

BY

"RIDDELL" friend.

William R. Willia



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## FIRESIDE FANCIES

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Invisible angels have riven  
In eastern horizon afar  
The storm-clouds that sweep o'er the heaven,  
And kindled the Chaldean's star.  
The cuckoo-clock chirps in the twilight,  
The snow is beginning to fall,  
And the flames, as they flicker and fly, light  
The shadows that curtain the hall.  
Those flames, blue and gold, fleet as fancies,  
Twinkle in, twinkle out, to and fro,  
Recalling the childish romances  
First read by their light long ago.  
Fairy lands of the heart fill those embers,  
Concealed in the visible beam,  
Fairy forms that our sad soul remembers,  
That hallowed youth's holiest dream.

The fire hath voices that mutter,  
    With laughter, and love-tones, and tears,  
And echoes that tenderly utter  
    Old tales of the long vanished years.  
And my dim, cosy corner invites me  
    To muse on the sparkling play  
Of the red flame that lulls and delights me  
    With visions ne'er dreamed of by day.  
'Tis late ; rest to-night, wheel and spindle,  
    Repose in the hearth's cheerful glow,  
While I sit by the coals as they kindle,  
    And list to the fast falling snow.  
For it taps on the window so eerie  
    And whispers as seeking to lure  
The spirit oft tempted and weary,  
    " Be thou pure, as my essence is pure."'  
Ah, behold ! what a quaint little fairy  
    Flits forth from the fierce flashing coal !  
Captivating the watcher unwary,  
    And charming the indolent soul,

And he murmurs, " Away with the pensée,  
    Away with the work of the day,  
And look on the pictures of fancy  
    Revealed in this luminous ray.  
Without us the snow gleams and glances,  
    The icicles cling to the eaves,  
And wierdly wind o'er the branches,  
    Like ghosts of the long fallen leaves.  
Without us the storm is amassing  
    Deep drifts over valley and wold,  
While the sigh of the old year in passing  
    Embitters the Christmastide cold.  
The storm-king rides forth on the mistral,  
    Upbearing his banner of ice,  
Converting the world into crystal,  
    Congealing the clouds in device.  
Look thou on thy hearth, 'tis a temple ;  
    Reflect on this flame, 'tis divine.  
Here worship the lordly and simple,  
    And I am the priest of that shrine,



I will show thee the homes I have haunted,  
The hearts I have blessed in my flight ;  
Come, follow to elf-land enchanted  
The fire-elf that woos thee to-night."

I smile to the spirit, assenting.

My spirit is young, and would gaze  
On the scene of his fitful frequenting  
Flashed forth in the mystical blaze.  
And at once, at my gesture appealing,  
He signs with a magical wand,  
And the vivified flames change, revealing  
A vision from far fairy land.

There's a cot on a mountain lonely  
That looms o'er the black abyss,  
The chamois that visit it only  
Recoil on a night like this.  
The pinnacles pierce highest heaven,  
The storm-clouds float frozen beneath ;  
The snow o'er each pathway is driven,  
Bewitching the wanderer to death.

There is naught in the desolate dwelling,  
The flake through the ruined roof falls,  
But the fire-light is flashing and filling  
With frescoes the bare, wooden walls.  
The dame and her dog doze together,  
Content, by the chimney place warm,  
But the maiden stands watching the weather,  
And prays 'mid the perilous storm.  
'Tis a maid of the mount as ethereal  
As the fée, seen in eventide mist,  
Whose ringlets the sun-god aerial  
With his coronal crowned while he kissed.  
A child, but the mind that hath nature  
As guide and companion alone  
O'er early wins spiritual stature,  
Is tuned to life's loftiest tone.  
Her fate is a short, simple story,  
Her soul is transparently fair,  
As the ice-crystals shaming the glory  
Of pearls in her glittering hair.

Her bridal home shall be lowly,  
Her bridal bell harsh and rude,  
But her heart is a paradise holy,  
Where only the angels intrude.  
She watches to-night for her lover,  
Who mounts from the valley below,  
Who hath sworn, "I will always discover  
A path through the desert of snow."  
Oh, better be false to his true-love !  
Oh, better forsworn of his troth !  
Better dally the hours with a new love,  
Than accomplish his terrible oath.  
The wolf and the eagle grow wary,  
The mist veils the chasm, the height.  
"Sweet saints, let him evermore tarry  
Ere woo with a death-kiss to-night."  
Yet heap on the generous fuel,  
Illumine the mountain waste wide,  
Let the fire like a heavenly jewel,  
Love's load-star, the wanderer guide.