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Two Fools in a Forest

JESSICA L. LEEPER

Where have the clouds gone?
 For under tree and branch there is
 No sound of falling rain.
 No echo of thunderous night.
 Two bonnets cast shadows upon sister's eyes
 As they wade in deep through the cool stream,
 Sparkling like the golden light of crystal caves.
 One dress red, the other white,
 Wander merrily in the woods of the other side,
 Leaving sights of home far behind,
 And step into a perilous night.
 Here comes a turn, there a fallen branch,
 A tree down over mossy ground.
 One walks on, one lost in song,
 Both unaware completely.
 In the shadows of the green there
 Lives an old and withered gnome.
 Little elf, thief, and spy,
 Watch as both go strolling by
 Through his dark and forested realm.
 One girl with long black braids came walking by.
 A girl of honey hair came laughing by.
 The little elf observed them with a frown upon his face,
 'Perhaps if I show my old man's eye
 They shall swiftly turn away.'
 Thus this he did as he sprung forth,
 Swaying his arms and stating,
 "Ye'd best be on your way dear lassies,
 For you're trespassing a dangerous wood."

But lo and with unfortunate taste
 The girl in rouge merely grinned,
 "I'll bet ye who so unpleasantly lectures
 Could do very little harm to us wanderers!"
 At this reply the little man sighed
 And put his hands together.
 "Very well my dears, ignore your fears,
 But I warn ye of the Banshee's cry!
 Step further if ye will my sweets,
 Step in, do not now be shy!
 If thou art so delightedly certain
 Then give this last stretch a try.
 But do not say ye were never warned!
 Do not beg to me in your cries!"
 The girls merrily laughed and pointed and sighed,
 "What nonsense this elf-kind speaks!"
 And with foolish pride and an arrogant stride
 They fell into eternal cold sleep.
 Beyond the elf's tree barrier lay
 The great and terrible grave,
 Where many fool's bodies now lie down in pale death
 At the foot of their final regrets.
 For there shone a silver pool,
 Deeper than seas,
 Where the spirit of the cold lady dwelt,
 Her eerie cry rang loud through the night,
 Too late to turn back now.
 So when you decide to go traveling, good reader,
 Or take a long hike in the woods,
 Take heed of what the little folk say,
 For they know the land better than you ever could!