

# story time

with Jill Haywood



bonfire - foguera  
embers - brases  
breeze - brisa  
kindle - encendre  
firewood - llenya  
diminish - disminuir  
folded - plegat  
dimmed - atenuat

Avui a l' "Story Time " escoltarem una història sobre un poble llunyà que té una tradició molt especial que aquí no fem. Cada any, per a la fira anual, s'encenen 12 fogueres al voltant del poble i els habitants escriuen les seves esperances i somnis en bocins de paper per llençar-los a les flames. Aquestes fogueres tenen un nom especial i es diuen 'Brases de l'esperança'."

### **Title: The Embers of Hope - a Village Tradition**

All over the village, people were talking about the fair. Everyone was excited for the weekend when sellers would come from all over the country to sell their crafts. There would be jewellery, exotic herbs and spices, clothes, seeds, plants. So many different things! And then of course there was the food - delicious cheese, sausages, cakes and bread. Best of all there would be a stall selling freshly fried doughnuts sprinkled with sugar. They were everyone's favourite, from the young children to their grandparents. Nobody could resist at least one sugary treat.

During the days before the fair, the children would talk about the rides and wonder which rides would come that year. Would there be anything new?

The adults would talk about past fairs when it had rained, past fairs when it has snowed. Would it be sunny this year?

There was a tradition in the fair of lighting small bonfires around the town called "Embers of Hope".

At twelve different places around the village, people built small bonfires. No-one had to walk far to find an Ember of Hope fire. The neighbours in each area of the village cooperated to bring firewood which was piled near the bonfire. There was enough firewood to keep each fire lit until midnight. Before lunch, at around 12 o'clock, the 12 fires were lit and would burn for 12 hours until midnight. The 12 hours was a symbol of a complete cycle of the clock and linked to a complete life cycle and also the yearly cycle of growing plants and harvesting.

The villagers often wore clothes of red, orange and gold during the fair to symbolise the fire. They prepared for a celebration that would kindle dreams of the future and give peace to the problems of the past.

The tradition of the Embers of Hope was to write things on pieces of paper and throw them into the fire to burn. Sometimes people wrote their hopes and dreams for the future and burnt them to send their dreams out into the

universe in the hope that they would come true. Other people took their papers and wrote the name of a problem or something they desired to forget. They threw the paper into the flames with the wish for it to vanish and diminish their pain.

Eventually Saturday morning came and at 10 o'clock the fair was officially opened. Two hours later fires were lit and as the villagers left their houses to wander the streets and visit the stalls, many people stopped by the nearest fire with their piece of paper.

One small girl threw a piece of carefully folded paper into the fire with the name of her dog who had died. She wanted her dog to have a peaceful rest.

Another boy's paper was about his dream to be a professional footballer. He had just been accepted onto the village team and he wanted to train hard and one day be able to play for his favourite team.

The father of a young girl, who was walking beside him, holding his hand, threw a paper into the fire with a wish that his daughter would be safe and happy for her whole life.

Everyone who passed the fire and burnt a paper made sure that the fire was burning brightly. Occasionally someone would take a log from the pile and add it to the fire.

As the day progressed, the village was alive with colours, enticing smells, and the sounds of laughter from the children on the rides. The rides spun in circles, the stalls were crowded with curious buyers, and the aroma of various foods drifted through the air. Around the village the Embers of Hope burned bright, casting warm glows across the faces of the villagers.

The young boy who dreamed of being a professional footballer stood by the fire, his eyes fixed on the embers as if he could already see his dreams taking shape. The father, with his daughter by his side, watched the flames with a serene expression, hoping the Embers of Hope would safeguard his child's future.

In the evening as it got dark and the stars came out, the fair took on a magical quality. The air was filled with the scent of burning wood and the collective wishes and dreams of the community.

The tradition of burning papers continued throughout the evening. The elderly threw pieces of paper with memories they wished to let go of, young couples

tossed notes with promises for their futures, and friends shared their dreams with one another.

At midnight the fires were allowed to burn out. The fires dimmed, and the last embers faded. The villagers continued to celebrate as the musicians picked up their instruments and began to play.

Next year the Embers of Hope would be lit again.

"Mentres passegeu avui per la Fira ,penseu una idea per escriure en el teu bocí de paper per llençar-lo a la foguera?"