

GENE STRATTON-PORTER



THE
FIRE BIRD

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PART I - THE LOVE DANCE OF YIADA

Medicine Man, O Medicine Man,
Make for me High Magic.
I, Yiada, daughter of White Wolf,
Mighty Chief of the Canawacs,
Mate of Star Face, Brave of the Mandanas,
I of your blood, I have said it!

From the roots of the white toluache lilies
Make me a strong medicine
That will drown my scorching spirit-fire
And empty my hands of their fulness.
Beat your sacred turtle drums
Loud and threateningly.
Drive back to the fear peopled forest
Of the far and dread Shadow Land
The flaming ghost of the fire bird
And the white flower of the still water.
Heal me of the dread head-sickness
Like the midsummer madness
Of foaming-mouthed quiota.

I, Yiada, proud daughter of the fierce Canawacs,
I, mate of the Brave, Star Face,
Chief of a forest of wigwams,
With ponies like the sands of the sea, have said it.
Hear me, for the healing of my sickened spirit!

Where the triumphant blue sea water,
Sky-gold all day in the slanting sunlight,
Silver-white in the uncertain moonlight,
Teases the pale sands of the craggy beaches,
Lay the lodge of my Father, White Wolf,

The savage hunter of beast and enemy,
First at the kill, Chief of great wealth,
Next in power to the high Sachem,
Chief of all Chiefs.

Many were the strong sons
Who sprang from White Wolf's loins—
I, Yiada, his one daughter, pride of Falcon Eye,
His daring chieftainess, from the far Mandanas.

Tall our wigwams of deer and bear and elk skins,
Stout our warm lodges of cedar and pine tree,
Many our robes of beaver and buffalo and marten,
Heavy our necklaces with cunningly carved beads,
Polished elk teeth and eagle talons,
Shining black obsidian and precious blue shell;
Our war ponies flocking like birds fleeing winter.

Always for me, the one daughter,
The warm spot by the storm fire,
The floating sweet fat from the cooking kettles,
The first crusty brown cake
From the smoking red baking stones,
The clear flowing gold sweet
From the tall nests of the wood bees;
The soft sun coloured robe of down fine doeskin
Embroidered with broad bands of white beads,
Luring beads of green, and blue, and yellow,
The red stained singing quills of the porcupine,
And downy snow white under feathers
From the breast of the white swan.

I, first in the picking of the juicy berries
The fruits of earth and bush,
Most skilful in the weaving
Of the bright story baskets,