NIGHT OF THE FIRE RAIN
~A THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCE PLAY –
FOR THE YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART
BY GLORIA BOND CLUNIE

CHARACTERS

ANGEL: twelve years
ESTRELLA: thirteen years
SKYLAR: fourteen years
GRANDMA BRIGHT: very old, very wise

SETTING

On a mountain range at the edge of THE VILLAGE.

Time: Night of the Fire Rain.
A mountain range on a
clear starlit night.

ANGEL rushes in. She joins ESTRELLA,
SKYLAR and a crowd of young people
standing on a ridge staring up at the sky.
The Community has gathered to celebrate
this special night.

Sitting alone, in her own world, GRANDMA
BRIGHT watches the same night and
beyond.

ANGEL

(scans the sky)
Wow.

ESTRELLA
You going?

ANGEL
Me? Not sure. But figured, I’d least come see.

ESTRELLA
Lot of folks come to see.

SKYLAR
Didn’t expect this many. Way more than last year.

ESTRELLA
I think, for some — they might be aging out soon.

SKYLAR
(waves)
My Mom. All those folks over there on that ridge – they’re just there to look.
Then, there’s some of us —! Where you from?

ANGEL
The range over by Way-Far.
SKYLAR

Your first time?

(ANGEL nods.)

My second.

(SKYLAR shows the scars on his palms)

ESTRELLA

Third.

(ESTRELLA shows her scars.
ANGEL touches them, then rubs her hands together.)

ANGEL

They're deep.

ESTRELLA

Enough amoroso salve – and the pain goes away.

(Grandma Bright rubs her scarred hands together)

Almost made it last time.

(squeezes ANGEL'S hands.)

Much stronger now.

ANGEL

Yes. Strong! Very strong.

(ANGEL reaches out. ESTRELLA extends her hands. ANGEL squeezes them.)

ESTRELLA

Strong.

ANGEL

Strong enough?

SKYLAR

You got to be strong here—but way stronger here. (points to heart.)

(SKYLAR rushes forward, pointing to the sky.)

ESTRELLA

Look! There! Look!

(SKYLAR and ESTRELLA wait breathlessly
ANGEL backs away.)
SKYLAR
No. Not it.  
*(sigh)*
But it’ll come.

*(ANGEL wipes at her eyes)*

ESTRELLA
Don’t cry. We haven’t missed it.

ANGEL
I thought it was happening. My chance. Then—I got scared.

SKYLAR
Only a fool would say, “Let’s grab a ball of fire” – and not be scared.

ANGEL
Yeah. And it’s so far.

GRANDMA BRIGHT/ESTRELLA
“There and back before you know it!”

ESTRELLA
That’s what Grandma Bright says.  
And she should know.  
When she went – she was the youngest ever.  
Ten!

GRANDMA
Don’t be braggin’ on me.  
Go ‘head. Brag.

SKYLAR
Ten? Knew she was young. But ten? How did she hold on? Must’ve been strong.

ESTRELLA
Strong then. Strong now! Don’t cross that woman.  
I’m not as strong as she is. But how can I say no? She’s why I’m here.  
Said it felt like—like heaven –

MAMA BRIGHT
Truth? Better!

SKYLAR
Yeah, once you get there.
If you get there?

Some don’t make it. Guess it makes it really special when you do.

(whispers, pointing to a group of kids)

See her? Over there? Bet she goes.
Looks like she could grab two balls of fire.

Him? Maybe, not so much.

(they laugh.)

Me—still not so sure. I’d like to but—

Grandma Bright says—

So worth it!

‘Sides, best to find out who you are, soon as you can— so you can be it –as long as you can.

So worth it to know.

Even for a second!

But she says, it’s not like anybody’s up there saying,

(Godlike voice)

“You are destined to be...”
“Healer, ball-dodger, tambour trainer...”

They don’t say— anything.
Least not with words.
GRANDMA BRIGHT
When you get there, they point at your spot on the Lake of Fire, 
And you’re supposed to go stand under this huge sky filled with stars.

They won’t push you, or anything. 
You have to step out on your own.

ANGEL
Sounds like the scary part. Stepping out on your own.

SKYLAR
No, the scary part is grabbing that ball of fire.

ESTRELLA
Well, yeah. You got to get there. Grandma Bright says, once you do—

GRANDMA BRIGHT
When you finally get to your spot, 
It’s like— the quietest place in the universe. 
And you stand there – all alone.

Take yourself a deep breath, and get very still, 
And it will come to you. 
Kind of comes over you. 
And as sure as there are four moons in the sky— 
You just know you belong! 
That you are here for something!

ESTRELLA
Say’s it’s the best feeling in the world—

GRANDMA BRIGHT
To know you are here for something!

ESTRELLA
And almost nothing ever shakes that feeling!

GRANDMA BRIGHT
And if it does— 
If you ever feel lost— 
You close your eyes, get still, and it will right on back to you— 
The Lake of Fire, the stars—The feeling – you belong.

ESTRELLA
I was little when that tear-twister came through.
SKYLAR
I remember it. 
*Everything* was gone.

GRANDMA BRIGHT
Gone, gone.

ESTRELLA
Flat to the ground. Not ’bout to get up gone. 
Not a tree standing as far as you could see. 
Even the Amazon tree was gone. Great-grant granddad planted it when they came to this place.

GRANDMA BRIGHT
Gone.

ESTRELLA
Could see Grandma Bright lost it that day. 
Just for a moment. 
Her face—like turning out a light. 
She laid herself down on the ground—flat down. 
Closed her eyes, got so still— we all thought she was dead. 
But when she opened them—
I stared into those dark green pools and knew everything would be all right. 
*(looks up at the stars)*

ANGEL
But everybody else says – it’s so scary.

GRANDMA BRIGHT
Yeah. Ain’t gonna lie. Scary.

ESTRELLA
Grandma Bright says . . .

ANGELA
“Grandma Bright says, Grandma Bright says.” This is your third time. 
What do you say?

ESTRELLA
It’s tricky –

ESTRELLA/GRANDMA BRIGHT
Grabbing that Ring of Fire!
GRANDMA BRIGHT
You think, after four hundred twenty-two generations, they could find another way to get us there, but –

ESTRELLA
Says, when you see it – don’t hesitate. And every time – But this time — ?

GRANDMA BRIGHT
Got to reach up and grab it! Hold on tight!
Looks like fire- and it feels like burning,
But you’ll be all right.
Trust the ancestors.
“Believe –beyond the fire!”
And when it swoops you up into the night—
Think about all the our people
Who held on! Rode the night sky— past Pain! Past Fear!
--Found the place beyond Not Knowing.

(SKYLAR jumps up.)

SKYLAR
Look! Is that it? Is that—? Come on!
(beat)
You with us?

GRANDMA BRIGHT (with echo)
Destiny—There! Waitin – Gonna say no to destiny?

(ANGE & ESTRELLA hesitate, then join SKYLAR)

(LIGHTS: Brilliant White Light floods the sky.)

GRANDMA BRIGHT (with echo)
Ready?
(she grabs for the Ring of Fire)
Reach!

SOUND: Music of Universal Energy.
(In exaggerated slow motion, ESTRELLA, ANGELA and SKYLAR extend a hand.
They stretch toward the sky!
LIGHTS: A flash of bright red light crosses the night . . .)

Lights fade out

~END OF PLAY~