

# Childhood Fever

Category: Healing

written by Eryn L. Oberlander | August 19, 2021

A kaleidoscope lit the apartment ceiling. Grinning clown faces and animated joker cards tantalized her. The air in the den hung heavy. Perhaps its ions had burst. A loud tarantella was whining in the background.

The child's face was crimson and she was perspiring. She yearned to quiet her fantasy and retreat from the surrounding madness. Overhead, her mother was yammering. The madonna knelt and perched her thin lips on the child's forehead. Acknowledging the fever, she mumbled inaudibly. A thermometer was thrust into the viscous mouth. The mercury shot up and rested at 105. The mother clung to her baby inferno.

The child babbled deliriously about imaginary figures she was balancing in mid-air. The madonna was horrified because she thought that her baby was deranged.

The elfin was washed down with alcohol. The ethanol chafed her pug nose. She was tossed into an ocean of oatmeal curds. Oatmeal pancakes congealed on her skin.

Eryn lay limp on her bed. When she scratched, the madonna grew cross. She knew better than to pick a pock! Her hands were clad in cloth. Oh, how she hated those cosmetic gloves!

The imp whimpered through the night. She had periodic convulsions. Her dendrites were contracting in staccato. She no longer had control over her body.

Beside her, sat the madonna. The sleepless hours had aged her mercilessly. She cried vinegar tears.

Finally, the wee body silenced its protest. The fever subsided and the delusions faded away. The raucous gypsy chant gave way to soothing song. Even the air regained its levity. The only evidence left from the eve lay in the drenched battlefield of bed.

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