

# Twilight

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In the year my grandmother was born, people around Bingley believed in fairies.

At Golt Stock Wood it is said that, sometimes, on a bright night, you could catch a glimpse of yellow tiny sparkles through the branches of the trees. But there was no evidence.

When my grandmother was eight, two young girls, Frances and Elsie, photographed these fairies wearing yellow dresses and dancing at Cottingley Beck. The fairies had become a reality.

When I was seven, I saw Elsie and Frances' pictures on television and I developed a schoolgirl crush. When I was eight I asked Santa Claus for a box brownie camera so that I, too, could photograph the fairies in the woods.

When I look through the camera's viewfinder I am the director of my own play. On my stage set I conjure up tales of nocturnal frolics. I command my fairies to come out to play. When the pale cool light, that shines from the moon, catches the camera lens I catch my breath in a moment of suspended delight. I soak in the intensity of what I cannot ordinarily see. I can hear the soft murmurings as the fairies make mischief. Yet, my woodland is not a malevolent copse.

When I was twenty three, an old and frail Elsie confessed that their childhood photographs of the sprightly fairies were an elaborate hoax, simple traces of a prank. Yet, even now, when I look through my viewfinder I can still see the golden glows and turquoise shimmers where our childhood imaginations are unleashed and our erstwhile dreams can come true.