

## **Lesson 1**

A thousand miles ago, in a quiet country east of the jungle and south of the mountains, there lived a Firework-Maker called Lalchand and his daughter Lila, who was eventually destined to follow in her father's footsteps.

Lalchand's wife had died when Lila was young. The child was a cross little thing with a bad temper, always crying and refusing her food, but Lalchand built a cosy cradle for her in the corner of the workshop, where she could see the sparks play and listen to the fizz and crackle of the gunpowder. Once she was out of her cradle, she toddled around the workshop laughing as the fire flared and the sparks danced. Many a time, she burnt her little fingers which stopped her in her tracks, but Lalchand splashed water on them, kissed her better and soon she was playing again.

When she was old enough to learn, her father began to teach her the art of making fireworks which excited her greatly. She began with little Crackle-Dragons, six on a string. Then, she learned how to make Leaping Monkeys, Golden Sneezes, and Java Lights. In no time at all, she was making all the simple fireworks with ease and even thinking about more complicated ones.

## **Lesson 2**

One day, she asked, "Father, if I put some flowers of salt in a Java Light instead of cloud-powder, what would happen?"

"Try it and see," he replied, almost daring her to, so she did. Instead of burning with a steady green glimmer, it sprayed out wicked little sparks with a faint crackle, each of which turned a somersault before going out.

"Not bad, Lila," remarked Lalchand. "What are you going to call it?"

"Mmm... Tumbling Demons," she stated, proudly.

"Excellent! Make a dozen and we'll put them into the New Year Festival display."

The Tumbling Demons were a great success, and so were the Shimmering Coins that Lila invented next. As time went on, she learned more and more of her father's art, until one day she said, "Am I a proper Firework-Maker now?"

"No, no," he chuckled, knowingly. "By no means. Ha! You don't know the start of it. What are the ingredients of fly-away powder?"

"I don't know," Lila stammered, her lip starting to tremble.

"Where do you find the ripe thunder-grains with orange shells?" questioned her father, with a glint in his eye.

"I've never heard of thunder-grains!" exclaimed Lila, her eyes wide with shock.

"How much scorpion oil do you put in a Krakatoa Fountain?" demanded her father, intimidatingly.

"A teaspoonful?" the girl responded, hesitantly.

"*What?* You'd blow the whole city up! You've got a lot to learn yet," he yelled in shock.