

Peeing on the Fire  
by Justin McGonigle

*If you play with fire, you will get burned.*  
-Proverb

I'm not sure whose idea it was to build a fire but I do remember who suggested the gas. I remembered seeing old boards, laying on the ground, down by the side of the barn. "And then we can pee on it," I said. "Yeah," someone else said. "We could build a fire and pee on it to put it out," I said, as we walked down the dark, old, splintery barn stairs.

I remembered seeing a red gas can days earlier beside some of my Father's tools. I knew that gas started fires. I poured some into a small, plastic cup and threw it onto a dry pile of boards. I lit it with some matches I had taken from the kitchen. It poofed up into life. A small, red and orange flame burned brightly on a section of one of the dry boards. It wasn't a large fire but I figured with time, it would grow and then we could pee on it. I watched satisfied, staring into the small flame, when I saw Dale, Dale was younger than us, pick up the gas can and pour gas onto the fire. I watched as a yellow, orange flame climbed up the stream of gas, into the can, and onto the small amount Dale had accidentally poured onto his pant leg. It was chaos!

"Fire!" I shouted and ran to the pile of dry boards and started beating Dale's leg with one of them to help put out the fire. I didn't know what else to do and there was no water! The fire was soon eliminated. Dale was in tears and screaming in agony. We gathered ourselves and picked Dale up and walked him up the stairs and towards the house. I ran inside to get my Mother and I pulled her outside. She grabbed the hose and began to spray Dale's leg. He screamed and cried : "Don't tell Mom!" over and over. His Mother was known to be strict and he was terrified to get into trouble.

His leg had suffered third degree burns. He stood there, best he could, as the water from the hose bounced off of his newly burned skin. Moments later, his brother brought him home, which was right down the street.

We never really talked about what had happened that day but I did see Dale's leg some time later. It looked like he had suffered a lot.

As far as fires go, we never did stop making them but I don't think we used gas anymore.