

A Note from Susan Cooper



From the very beginning, our lives have been cyclical. At the solstices, the sun reaches its highest or lowest point in our sky, giving us the longest or the shortest day of the year; at the equinoxes, day and night are almost equal. Spring equinox, summer solstice, autumn equinox, winter solstice: round and round they go. If you live on a planet that circles a sun, your time is governed by the patterns of light and darkness, summer and winter, warmth and cold. And, of course, life and death. Once our forebears learned to farm, they planted and harvested at the equinoxes, but it was the solstices that caught their attention. The extremes. They watched their days shrink from the bright abundance of high summer to the bleak, dark cold of winter, and they invented rituals to make sure the light would come back again: to bring the new day, the new year, the rebirth of life. The rebirth rituals have become traditions that we still celebrate, whether or not we remember where they came from. It's a universal impulse, this celebration of the light as a symbol of continuing life.



THE SHORTEST DAY

The logo for Candlewick Press, featuring the letters 'C' and 'P' in a stylized font, with a small figure of a person holding a candle between them.
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