

Feena the Little Flower Fairy

Part I - Education

The Gathering

Night had fallen over the small yard. The friendly moon was shining brightly in the clear, starry sky and looking down upon the small gathering of fairies below him. They had gathered in the little rock garden by the bird bath, as they did every full moon. The moon had seen many of these gatherings because one took place in every yard. After all, fairies lived in every yard. But tonight he was watching his favorite yard, the one that always looked so romantic, especially in the moonlight. And because it was him who was to be credited for that, he was especially proud.

In the center of a sweet smelling rose's open white petals stood the fairy queen. She was wearing a sparkling, ice blue gown made of the finest silk and stardust. She spoke to the fairy students.

"My dear fairies," she started in a voice like bright silver, "you have worked very hard these past weeks. You have learned how to take care of the flowers and the trees. For your final exam, each of you will now be assigned to take care of a specific plant until the next full moon. The fairy council, your teachers, and I will then judge how well you cared for it. That way, we can determine where to best assign you in the future. I will be reading out the list now. Please move forward when I call your name."

The ten fairy students fluttered their wings excitedly. They were still quite young and had started their education as plant caretakers the previous full moon, under Lydia, the fairy teacher. With their soft hands they had watered, fertilized and comforted the plants, as well as showered them with fairy energy. If they did a good job now, each of them would be assigned either a specific yard, area, or plant family. Maybe one day they would even be so good at it that they themselves would be teaching young fairies how to care for plants. Each one, of course, had certain wishes as to what she would like to do when she grew up. But the queen alone, the wisest and most intelligent of all the fairies, would decide which job she would assign to each of them. But one could still wish... Dreamily, Feena, the smallest of the fairies, gazed at the beautiful colors of the flowers in the yard. Which ones would she get to take care of? The proud roses? The giggly violets?

"Feena?" the queen asked for the third time. "Are you even listening to me?" Oh dear! Feena's face went pale. She hadn't paid attention to the queen and had missed what her job was going to be! Voice trembling, wings aflutter, she rose a bit above the heads of her friends, who looked at her, shaking their heads.

"I'm sorry!" she squeaked, embarrassed, and gave the queen a scared look. But the queen just looked down at her lovingly and repeated what she had said.

"Feena, you get to care for the daisies."

Feena was disappointed, but she nodded. After all, little fairies can't just talk back to the queen. She fluttered back down. Daisies! Bah! Those puny white things scattered all over the yard. It would be awfully hard work not to miss any of them. She would have to fly back and forth all day even though she was still only a little fairy.

She hung her head while everyone around her was chattering excitedly. Vain Doria would get to care for the roses, of all things! And silly Miria had been assigned the violets.

"Now," said the queen, "please all go to bed, so that you're fresh and rested tomorrow morning." The gathering was over and the young fairies flew home, full of anticipation for the next day. Fairies don't have houses, they sleep underneath their favorite flowers or bushes. For them, that's home. Feena fluttered around the yard sadly and didn't really feel like going to sleep. She was much too nervous and was not looking forward to the next day at all. She aimlessly flew around and finally landed on one of the highest branches of her friend Alfred, the apple tree. He had already been asleep but the stardust from Feena's wings tickled his bark and woke him up.

"What's wrong, Feena?" Alfred asked.

"Bah," Feena said, "we'll start working tomorrow but they assigned me the daisies, of all things. Everybody else gets to care for the grand colorful flowers that sit neatly in the flowerbeds, while I have to fly around the whole yard and make sure I don't miss even one. And daisies are so small and plain! You can't make them into a bouquet and they don't even have a scent. Why can't I get another flower instead?"

She sighed, her little wings drooping.

Alfred saw that Feena's bright green eyes were brimming with tears. He cleared his throat.

"But Feena," he began in a fatherly voice, "every being is important and has its place in this world. What would a green lawn be without little, happy splashes of color? Of course nobody will be picking a grand bouquet of daisies, but which flowers do the children use to make their daisy chains? Well, daisies! And think of all the young girls in love who use flowers for their 'he loves me, he loves me not's. Which flowers do they pick for that? Daisies are lovely flowers. They like everybody and they try to delight everyone's eye by growing everywhere, not just inside the flower beds. They just want to bring happiness to everyone, everywhere! What would happen to those lovely daisies if there was no fairy to care for them?"

Alfred stopped talking because Feena had started to cry.

"Ahem," he cleared his throat. "Don't cry, or you'll have to start work tomorrow with your little eyes all puffy. You'll frighten the flowers!"

Feena had to giggle, despite her tears.

"Oh Alfred," she said, "thank you for your help. I never looked at it like that. Of course the daisies are important. And I will be honored to care for them. You'll see: I will be the best, hardestworking daisy caretaker you've ever seen!"

Feena wiped her eyes and gently stroked Alfred's bark.

"Good night, Alfred! I have to go home now. I love you!"

"I love you, too," said Alfred.

His smaller twigs waved goodbye to the excited little fairy, who flew home as fast as the wind, trailing bits of stardust behind her. The glittering star dust slowly sank to the ground where, by morning, it would turn into drops of dew to refresh the little flowers when they woke up.

Falling asleep, Alfred could still hear Feena humming a happy little melody in the distance.

Daisies

The next morning, Feena woke up early. She stretched her little wings and yawned. Then she fluttered excitedly above the dewy grass. Here and there, some flowers were also up early and slowly opening their petals. In the distance, she could see her friends also up and on their way. They all met at the bird bath, where Lydia, their teacher, was waiting for them. She went over the most important points once again before they would each be off on their own.

Feena's best friend Cilli waved to her.

"Hello Feena!"

Feena flew over to her. Cilli was going to care for the little buttercups growing right at the entrance to the yard and she was at least as excited as Feena. They were so busy whispering to each other, they hardly noticed their teacher wishing them all good luck. They knew they could always ask Lydia for advice, because of course it was the older fairies' responsibility to keep an eye on everything. After all, they had much more experience than the little fairy students. And only the best of the fairy teachers were members of the fairy council that advised the queen on difficult issues.

Then they were off. As if there had been a secret signal, the ten little fairies fluttered away, each eager to be the first to reach her assigned plants. Feena didn't know where to start, so she decided to fly along with Cilli to the entrance gate and say hello to any daisies growing there. The daisies were still very sleepy when she got there. After all, it was very early and there were hardly any humans around yet for the flowers to delight. "Good thing that the humans can't see us," Cilly said.

"They wouldn't know what to think if they saw us here, talking to the flowers!"

"That's true," said Feena, just as they arrived at the buttercups.

The little flowers launched clumsily into a song for Cilli.

"Light she was and like a fairy, and her shoes were number nine! Herring boxes, without topses, sandals were for Clementine!"

"Oh my, how embarrassing," Feena thought, listening to them, because they were singing very out of tune. Of course, it was the thought that counted, and Cilli was so happy her cheeks flushed as she fluttered excitedly up and down in front of her new charges.

"Have fun!" Feena called over to her, landing a bit further down, next to the first daisy.

It was already noon by the time Feena took her first break. She had covered the whole yard, introducing herself to every single daisy. So taking care of each little flower was possible after all. She did not need to worry anymore! She had counted them, too. Thirty three. And she knew the names of each one of them.

She would have to care for all of them, but if nothing went wrong, she would also have time to play. Fairies are very happy and joyful. They like to celebrate and dance. If they take good care of their assigned flowers, they have a lot of spare time to just fly around and come across new things every day.

Feena happily fluttered over to Alfred, the apple tree, to tell him all about her first day at work. On the way over, she spotted a tiny little daisy, so hidden inside a clump of tall grass that she hadn't even noticed it before. When she got closer, she noticed that the little flower was leaning weakly to one side and looking at her seriously.

"What's the matter?" Feena called worriedly, flying to it as fast as her wings would carry her.

"Oh," said the little flower, "it's nothing. I'm just very old and will soon go to join the eternal cycle."

"You mean you will wilt?" Feena was horrified.

"I don't want that to happen! I'll go get help right away!" she yelled, already on her way.

The little daisy couldn't stop her. It smiled bravely one more time before it wilted.

Feena went straight to Lydia, the teacher, and made her come with her. She grabbed her hand and dragged her over to the brave little flower.

"You have to help the little flower, quick!"

Lydia looked at the wilted daisy and took Feena into her arms.

"My dear, I'm sorry, but there's nothing you can do for it anymore. Its life has run its course and its energy will now join the eternal cycle of nature. That's how God made it and we can't change that. But you'll see, soon there will be new life sprouting up right in this little daisy's spot."

She gently dragged the sniffing Feena with her over to the sick ward, where she made her drink some nectar to raise her spirits.

Somewhat strengthened, Feena flew over to Alfred, the apple tree. She flew lower than usually, though, and sat down on a thick branch. She dangled her legs and looked down.

"Hello Feena," said Alfred, "you look sad again. Don't you like your new job?"

"Oh Alfred," Feena replied sadly, "one of the daisies wilted today and I couldn't do anything to help. That's so unfair!"

Alfred thought for a long time before he spoke.

"It's not unfair, Feena. It's nature. The flowers and stalks wilt and become nourishment for new plants. The flowers are generous and give their energy to the flowers that follow them. But the soul of your little flower doesn't die. It will be reborn in a new plant, in another spot in the yard. Think about it: the little flower spent its whole life rooted to one spot in the yard. But now that it's wilted, it can nourish a new flower and can sprout up at another spot somewhere else in the yard. How exciting that must be for the little flower! This way, it can try out many different spots in the yard and gain a lot of experience. It travels a lot and gets to see many things. It might be sad for you to see the flower wilt, but it's very exciting for the little flower. So don't be too sad."

Feena had to think about that for a while first. She was still much too sad to have a long talk with Alfred yet. She flew home, deep in thought, leaving lots of star dust in her wake for her friends, the daisies.

In the following days, she tried to do even better at her work, secretly hoping that the flowers would never have to wilt if she just took really good care of them. But she knew she wouldn't actually be able to do anything when their time would come.

At first, she avoided the spot in the garden where it had happened. But when she flew over it a few days later, she saw that a teeny-tiny daisy had sprouted there. It was too little to talk to her yet, but it didn't matter, she was still happy. Alfred had once again been right. A whole new little flower had sprouted up in this spot. And who knew, maybe she would soon meet the soul of the other daisy in another spot in the yard. What a joy that would be! Happy and excited, she flew off to Alfred. She couldn't wait to tell him about this right away. She was humming her happy little melody so loudly that the children who were playing in the yard stopped to listen. But how could they have known that the sound they were hearing was a fairy?