

IN THE GARDEN OF THE FLOWERING CARPET

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IN THE Garden of the Flowering Carpet there stands a Tree. Every day the boys and girls of Fairyland gather about it to study and work and play, because it is their Tree of Example. It is their school. It is where they learn the difference between what is right and what is wrong, to improve their manners, and to prepare for the time when they will be ready for the Tree of Life.

The Tree of Life is also in the midst of the Garden of the Flowering Carpet. But no one can see it. It is hidden from the sight of the Fairy children until, on a certain day at the seventh year of their growing, they are ready for the Great Adventure of learning the meaning of things.

The Tree of Life is an ethereal tree which cannot be seen in broad daylight, and it cannot be known until the child is in the seventh year of his growing. Only at that certain time does it shine for the Fairies, and the light is so bright at first that the boys and girls are taken by surprise. The brilliant, ethereal light burst suddenly into the Garden of the Flowering Carpet one night in June.

On that wonderful night in June two dozen boys and two dozen girls were gathered together under their Tree of Example, studying their lessons as all good children do. Each one had learned to take in all the right thoughts and all the right feelings from the colors about him, and from his playmates and friends of Nature. Each one had also learned to push away all the wrong thoughts and all the wrong feelings that had somehow grown into his heart and mind. The Fairies had learned these lessons so well that they had become little shining lights themselves. And because each boy and each girl was alight with good thoughts and good feelings that certain night in June, the Big and Shining Light of the Tree of Life reached straight into their minds and hearts. It burst forth in a radiant stream of splendor.

“O-o-o-o-o-o,” exclaimed a chorus of tiny voices, and the girl Fairies swept into the sky, carrying the fragrance of the flowers as they sped away in fright.

The boys were somewhat braver, but deep inside they were a little scared too. They pretended not to be. They didn't want the girls to know that they were really just as frightened as they at so sudden and brilliant a light. So they remained in the Garden, some throwing themselves flat on the ground to take strength from their Mother Earth. Others hugged their knees and clenched their hands and leaned hard against the Tree of Example to keep from appearing too much alarmed.

For a while, of course, the Fairies' own little lights became dim. Fear had made them dark. But very

soon they knew that the radiant Light from Above was friendly and kind, and their fears all went away, and the light in themselves began to shine once more.

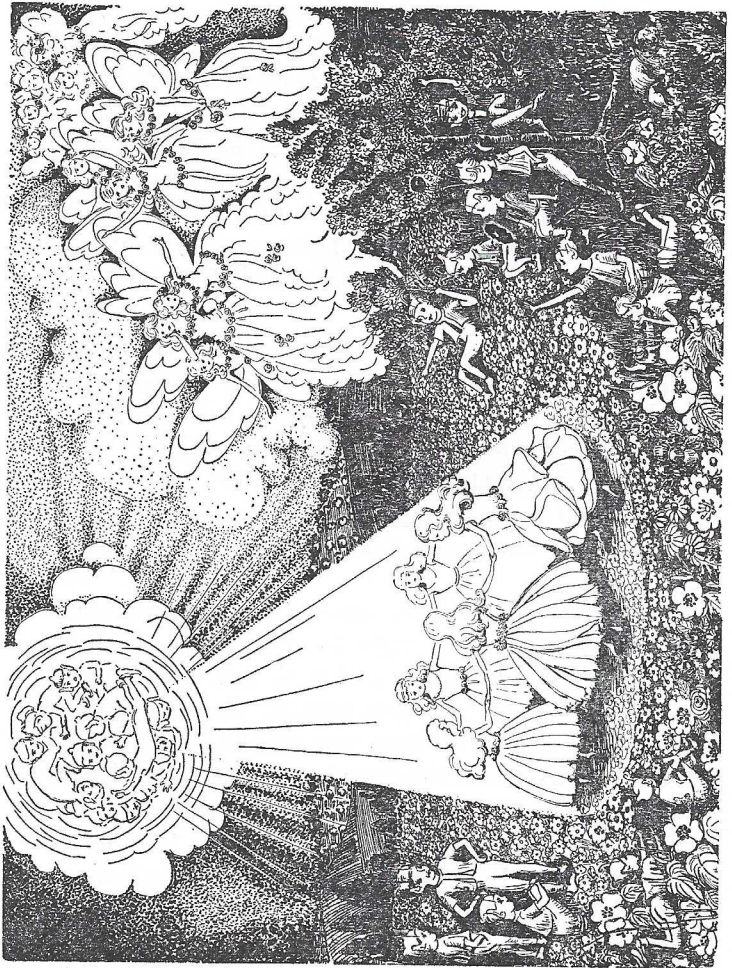
The girl Fairies drifted back out of the clouds. They hovered just above the Tree of Example, expressing to each other their wonder and surprise. Five of them, more adventurous than the others, put off their wings of flight and descended into the arc of light, at the base of the wonderful Tree of Life they could not see.

Twelve of the boys, even more adventurous than their five sisters, boldly shed their feelings, and reached out to take hold of twelve rays of Light. With astonishing speed they were swung high into the whirling ethereal branches above the ground. The others watched and applauded, and wondered if they would ever dare to grasp a ray from the Glowing Tree of Life.

High in the branches some of the boys seemed to take a mischievous delight in their new experience, while others felt fright and some felt laughter, and some just closed their eyes to think what they should do. Only one of the boys was able to float instantly into the rhythm of that wondrous Tree. He called to his brothers to try to help them if he could.

“See,” he laughed. “It’s easy. It’s as if you were a bird flying or a thistle blowing, or even just one of your own good thoughts breathing itself into the air.”

And so the other boys tumbled about in a little confusion at first, until finally all of them stretched



out easily into the rhythm of Life like carefree birds, and blowing seeds, and the clean flight of one kind thought.

One by one the twelve boys shed their feelings too, and courageously took hold of the rays of Light, and were lifted quickly up into the whirling brightness above the Garden. One by one the girl Fairies put off their wings and descended, to join their sisters in the arc of Light that flooded the Flowering Carpet at the base of the Tree.

The girls grew to resemble Butterflies and Flower Petals and the Rainbow Hues of the Morning Dew, as they danced and frolicked in the Living Light. The boys, however, grew to look like the more active living creatures of the air and sea and land. And from the seventh year of their growing until another seven years had passed, all the boy and girl Fairies studied the meaning of things in the wonderful Light of the Tree of Life.