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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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How West Wind Helped Dandelion

There was once a Dandelion plant which grew in the grass just outside a garden fence. The leaves of the plant were thick and green, and its flower (held on rather a high stem, for it was a late blossom) was very full and round, and of the brightest yellow.

The Dandelion was usually as happy as a queen — though not because of the golden crown, oh, no! Nor is it the crown which makes the queen happy, if that is what you are thinking! But the Dandelion was happy in the beautiful world and in her loving friends, and happy in her work and her play.

Who were her friends? Oh! the Sunbeams that came sliding down from the great sim and kept little Dandelion warm, and made her green leaves greener and her yellow flower brighter whenever they came; and the Raindrops who tumbled their little silvery selves down upon her, as if in a great fury sometimes, but only intending a frolic and not really hurting her. They brought her all the water she had to drink and bathe in, and Dandelion missed them very much if they stayed long away. The great Winds were her friends, too. Dandelion was just the least bit afraid of them, to tell the truth, and liked them best when they were gentle and quiet, or when they sent their messengers, the little Breezes, to play with her.

Dandelion had friends of another sort, too; little creatures made of music, motion, and feathers, — (we call them birds).

Insects, too, visited her; butterflies as yellow as her flower, grasshoppers as green as her leaves, bees going a-marketing for honey and pollen, ants running nimbly along on their six threadlike legs, and many, many others, down to the tiny, moving, black specks which seemed too small to be alive and yet were as full of life as their larger neighbours.

Besides all these friends. Dandelion had some flower friends; the clovers who lived near her on the roadside, and the garden flowers who lived on the other side of the fence. The nearest neighbours among the garden flowers were some morning glories who had actually climbed over the fence and were as friendly as possible.

Dandelion's play was with any of these different friends. Her work was to grow and make seeds, — as many good seeds as she possibly could. As the long, bright days passed. Dandelion worked faithfully, in a flower's quiet, unseen way of working; and at last her seeds were formed. Instead of the golden crown of a flower which she had worn, her stalk held up a beautiful ball of silvery gauze. The tiny seeds were in this ball and would be ripe very soon.

One day Dandelion saw two children. Max and Nannie, walking about in the garden in a very businesslike way. When they came to the morning glory vine, she could hear what they were saying.

"Where is the box for the morning glory seeds. Max? " called the little girl. "I see ever so many ripe ones."

"Here it is," replied Max, who had been looking in the basket which he carried. "We must gather a great many morning glory seeds, for you know we want to plant them all along the fence next year; and we are going to send some to Cousin Fan, too."

"Yes, and then she will have the same kind of flowers away off there that we have here," said Nannie, as she poked among the leaves and blossoms of the morning glory vine to find the plump seed vessels. Soon she had gathered all the ripe ones, and she and Max went back up the garden walk and into the house.

The Dandelion plant pondered on what it had heard.

Seeds! Why, Dandelion plants had seeds as well as morning glory vines! Probably Max and Nannie would come for her seeds. They would soon be ready, — in a few days, surely.

The few days passed quickly. Every morning Max and Nannie came out with their basket and little boxes and went to the garden plants, gathering the ripe seeds. But alas for the hopes of the Dandelion plant! They never looked at her or even thought of her seeds, although they loved dandelions as well as any other children.

Poor Dandelion felt very much slighted. Why did not Max and Nannie want her seeds to plant next year or to send to Cousin Fan? Who would gather her seeds? She had tried so hard and worked so faithfully, and arranged her seeds so beautifully . Was it all for nothing?

Hark! "Cheer-up! Cheer-up!" sang a robin in the orchard; and a little whispering breeze rustled past her, breathing softly; "Wait, oh, wait!" "Ah! But what will become of my seeds? No one will gather them and they will all be wasted."



The breeze passed on and then came a stronger puff of air. "West Wind is coming," thought Dandelion, trembling a little; and just then she heard him calling.

"What, ho! There, Dandelion! Are you too warm? I will fan you. Are you too wet? I will help you shake the heavy drops from your leaves and flowers."

"No," said the Dandelion, "my leaves are not laden with water, nor is my heart parched with heat; but my seeds, my precious seeds are all to be wasted. No one will gather them."

"Ho, ho!" laughed West Wind, noisily, but kindly. "And what do you wish to have done with your seeds?"

"I wish they could be planted next year," said Dandelion, "some of them here, and some of them far away, — just as would be done to the seeds of the garden plants."

"Ho, ho!" laughed West Wind again, as noisily and kindly as before. "That is an easy matter to arrange. In fact it is arranged. It is one of the things I was to attend to this very morning, if your seeds were ripe."

"And have you brought a little box with you?" asked Dandelion.

"Not I" replied West Wind. "I manage differently from the children. I sow the seeds as I gather them, and I also cover them. Then they are all ready to wave up and grow in the early spring."

"Oh! thank you, good West Wind," said Dandelion.

"What a kind friend you are!"

"It is a part of our work," said West Wind. "My brothers and I have a great deal of seed-sowing to do in all the forests and fields over the whole earth. But I must not talk any longer. Now, ready! One, two, three, whew! Away they go."

Dandelion heard a merry whistle and felt a sudden strong puff against her. At the same instant all her seeds were gone. Where the feathery white ball had been there showed now a little bald knob. "Why!" said Dandelion rather bewildered, "how quickly that was done!"

She looked about her. Here and there on the grass near her she saw several of her seeds; and then looking farther and yet farther away she could see others whirling and dancing through the air carried along by the friendly seed sower. West Wind.

The little silky plume wore, and which had made Dandelion's ball of silvery gauze, made it easy for the wind to take the seeds as far as Dandelion could wish; and some were also left to grow right there on the roadside bank, where she herself had always lived.

Dandelion was very happy. The robin in the orchard sang again his hearty "Cheer-up ! Cheer-up!" and a little breeze which followed after West Wind whispered softly as before: "Wait ! Oh, wait!"

"Yes," said Dandelion; "there was no need of my worrying. But who would have thought that the great West Wind would take care of the seeds of a plain little Dandelion!"