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Jack Frost's Sweetheart

Abbie Phillips Walker

Of course, the Elf who awoke the Flower Elfin was to blame, but the sun was so warm he was sure it was Spring and time for her to bloom, so out she popped. But instead of the nice, soft, green cover she had always seen on the ground, she found one that was quite white and soft.

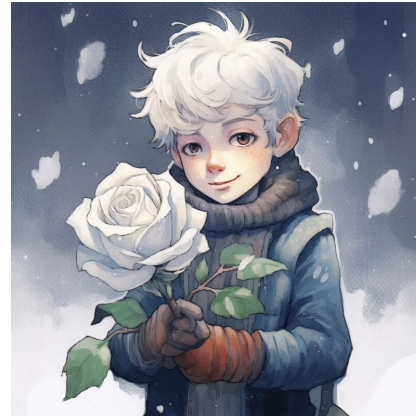
The poor little Elfin was terribly frightened, for it was cold as well as strange-looking, and she could not find her way back under the ground. But while she was crying, along came Jack Frost.

"Hello," said he. "What are you doing out here this cold weather?"

Of course, Elfin flower was not a bit afraid, for she had never heard of Jack Frost and his cold breath. So she looked at him very sorrowfully and told him her sad tale.

"Well, well, that is too bad," said Jack Frost. "But now you are out, suppose you come along with me to my festival that will be held tonight. I am sure you will get used to the cold and not mind it at all."

Jack Frost picked up the Elfin flower and carried her off to the crystal forest, where everything was ready for the grand festival of the Frost King. The Fairies were there, and the goblins all dressed in their fur coats, and when they saw the little Elfin, they all asked her how she happened to be out, for they knew that no elf or gnome ever comes out unless a fairy or goblin calls to them in the winter time.



She was a pretty little creature, and they all looked slyly at Jack Frost, for as he had brought her to the feast, they wondered if he had fallen in love with her. And as the evening wore away, they were quite sure this was true.

Jack Frost placed the Elfin at his right, which was the seat of honor at the table, and all the time he smiled and talked to her, almost forgetting his other guests.

When the feast and frolic were over and it was time for all of them to go home, Jack Frost stood up and said: "My friends and guests, as this little Elfin has become used to our cold weather, don't you think we might make her a member

of our winter society and let her always come out at this time each year?"

"She looks like a little rose to me," said the Fairy Queen. "I am afraid she will never be able to stand the cold, especially Jack, if you treat her as you do other flowers who happen to overstay their time in the early fall days."

But Jack Frost was not to be upset by this remark. He smiled very sweetly at the Queen. "You, my dear Queen, can, with your little gold wand, do many wonderful things," he said. "Give this little Elfin a name, and I promise that she shall bloom unharmed by me, and I am sure she will add beauty to the winter scenes."

"It is Christmas time," said the Queen. "She shall be called the Christmas Rose and bloom each year above the snow."

Jack Frost bowed low before the Elfin and said, "My Christmas Rose, I am glad to welcome you as a member of our winter society," and the little Elfin, who was quite white before, blushed a pale rose color which was most becoming, for I forgot to tell you she wore a green bonnet.

Then everyone said good night, and Jack Frost, taking the little Elfin by the hand, ran swiftly out into the night.

"He is in love with her," whispered the fairies and goblins. "We will watch and see what happens." If mortals could see what the magic folk do, they would find when the Christmas Rose comes out each year that Jack Frost always is near and whispers to her that she is dainty and sweet. And that is the reason the fairies say that sometimes the Christmas Rose is white and sometimes a pale rose color — she blushes when her lover tells her she is beautiful.

And while mortals call the winter rose the Christmas Rose, the magic folk call her Jack Frost's Sweetheart.

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