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Spring and Her Helpers

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Once upon a time in March, Winter received a message from Father Time that Spring was ready to take charge of the land. Winter could go away for his long vacation as soon as he liked. Winter checked his pocket calendar and said, "Surely, surely, I must be off in a day or two. I suppose everyone will be glad. They are always in a hurry for me to go."

North Wind whistled and reminded Winter how joyful the children were over the first snow and ice, how glad the plants were to have a chance to rest, and how sleepy some of the animals were getting. North Wind said they would miss Winter dreadfully if he did not take his turn, even more than they knew. Winter brightened up and said, "Very true, friend. Spring and Summer and Autumn could not do their work if I neglected mine. So I'll go as soon as Spring appears, and rest and be ready to come back in December."

A few days later, Winter started his journey, and Spring became the ruler of the land. Spring knew she could not do her work alone, so she asked for help. First, she went to the Sun and asked for more light and heat because the earth was hard, bare, and cold. The Sun smiled and sent great companies of his messengers, the sunbeams, down to the earth to help Spring make the earth beautiful.

But Spring knew the sunbeams alone could not do it all. She spoke to King Eolus and asked for his three brothers. She wanted the gentle South Wind to be with her most of the time, and East Wind and West Wind to help when she needed them. King Eolus had been expecting this request, and the three brothers began to bestir themselves. South Wind sent a little breeze as a messenger to Spring, saying they would be ready whenever she called them and would gladly help her make the earth beautiful.

Then began a busy time for Spring and her helpers. The sunbeams worked silently, melting the ice and snow, coaxed vapor from the surface of the water, and carried it up to the blue sky, where it floated in downy white clouds. They warmed the earth and gilded the waters, making the sky bluer than ever. The Winds worked, each in their own way. When Spring saw that rain was needed, she called East Wind, and he immediately emptied the clouds of all the water the sunbeams had saved.

East Wind said, "People make a great mistake when they think that the sunbeams and I have nothing to do with each other, for if the sunbeams didn't bring up the vapor for me, and if I didn't empty the clouds for them, how would the earth have rain, I wonder? To be sure, I always carry some with me, but I should not have enough without that which is stored away in the clouds." East Wind hovered about, seeming to be everywhere at once in his big gray cloak, while the raindrops were hurrying down to the earth.

South Wind brought a few birds with him when he came from the sunny lands where the birds live in the winter. Two or three bluebirds and robins flew around, singing and cheering Spring on. Spring gazed fondly after them, saying, "Robin is such a cheery fellow, and Bluebird is so bonny in his sky-tinted feathers. No other birds are quite as dear to me, and I am sure they carry joy wherever they go."



South Wind worked with the sunbeams, warming and drying the air and ground, coaxing all the growing things to make haste. He whistled sweet, merry little tunes, while the sunbeams touched the seeds, leaves, and flowers, and they started to bloom, one after another, fresher and prettier than ever.

But Spring's work was not yet finished. She called for West Wind, who blew here and there, sweeping the hillsides and meadows and taking away the old leaves that had been useful blankets for the plants all winter. West Wind and the sunbeams went into the farthest corner of the woods and dried the soaked mosses and tree trunks, and greeted the animals that had been keeping still all winter, such as bears, woodchucks, and squirrels.

West Wind whistled a jollier tune than South Wind had. The sunbeams shone their brightest, and the smooth waters flashed splendor. The rushing streams murmured music, fishes darted about under the ripples, frogs sang their gurgling song, insects sported joyously in the air, and birds warbled to each other everywhere.

Spring looked and listened, and looked again over the land which Winter had left so bare and silent and dreary. Soft, green grass covered the ground, and blossoms beautified the orchards, while on every tree tiny leaf-banners fluttered and rustled. All her pretty flowers, from daffodils to violets, stood in their places, and none was missing.



Spring gazed with joy. Her work was done, for the world was radiant with beauty. She smiled and said to her helpers, "Thanks, little Raindrops, and to you too, East Wind. You have done your work well. And thank you, South Wind and West Wind, for your help. You have all made the earth beautiful."

The sunbeams, the winds, and the birds all cheered, and Spring felt happy and content. She knew she had done her job well, and she had done it with the help of her friends. She looked forward to seeing what the rest of the season would bring and to working with her helpers again next year.

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