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The Fairies And The Dandelion

Abbie Phillips Walker

The Fairies say that a long time ago the dandelion did not have a yellow blossom or the fluffy white cap it wears after the yellow has been taken off.

They tell the story that one night, a long time ago, while they were holding one of their revels in a field, sounds of weeping and moaning were heard.

The Fairy Queen stopped the dance and listened. "It comes from the ground," she said, "down among the grasses. Hurry, all of you; find out who is in trouble and come back and tell me."

Away went the Fairies into the fields and gardens and lanes. Darting in and out among the blades of grass, they found queer-looking weeds with leaves resembling a lion's tooth. They were crying and chanting a sing-song tune:

"Here we grow so bright and green,
The color of grass, and can't be seen.
O bitter woe, but we'll not stop
Till the Fairies give us a yellow top."

Back flew the Fairies to their Queen and told her what they had heard.

"If only they had asked for some other color!" she said. "There are so many yellow blossoms now. The buttercup, the goldenglow, and the goldenrod will all be jealous if another yellow flower enters their bright circle. Go back and ask them if they will be quiet if we give them a white top."

The Fairies danced away to the crying dandelions with the Queen's message.

"The Queen will give you a white top," they said.

"No, no!" they cried. "Yellow is the color we should wear with our green leaves. It is the color of the sun and we wish to be as near like him as we can," and they all began to cry:

"O bitter woe, we will not stop
Till the Fairies give us a yellow top."

They made such a noise that the Fairies put their fingers in their ears as they flew back to the Queen.

The grass-blades stood up higher and looked about. "Do quiet those noisy weeds," they said to the Queen; "give them the yellow top for which they are crying, and let us go to sleep. We have been kept awake since sunset and it will soon be sunrise."

"What shall we do?" said the Queen. "I do not know where to get the yellow they want."

"If we could get some sunbeams," said one Fairy, "we could have just the color they are crying for. Of course, we cannot venture into such a strong light, but the Elves might gather them for us."

So they went to the Elves and asked them to gather the sunbeams for the next day, and bring them to the valley the next night.

The Elves were very willing to help them, but the sun shone very little the next day, and they were able to gather only a few basketfuls of the bright golden color.

When the Queen saw the quantity she was in despair. "This will never go around," she said, "and those that are left without a yellow top will cry louder than ever."

"Why not divide it among them?" said one Fairy. "It will last for a little while and we can give them our fluffy white caps when that is gone. We shall take them off soon and the dandelions can wear them the rest of the season."

The face of the Queen brightened. "The very thing," she said, "if only the noisy little weeds will agree. Go to them and say they can wear yellow of the very shade they most desire half the season if they are willing to accept our fluffy white caps for the other half."

The Fairies hurried to the dandelions and told them what the Queen had said. The dandelions stopped crying and said they would be satisfied, and the Queen rode through the meadows, fields, gardens, and lanes, dropping gold upon each weed as she passed along.

In the morning when the sun beheld his own bright color looking up at him he was so surprised that he almost stood still.

The Fairies kept their promise, and when it was time to take off their fluffy white caps they went among the dandelions and hung a cap on each stem.



The dandelions did not cry again, and the grass sleeps on from sunset to sunrise, undisturbed.

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