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## The Fairies' Dolls

*Abbie Phillips Walker*

One day every year, the Queen of the fairies grants her little subjects a holiday during which they can make a wish. If the Queen deems it good and right, she fulfills their desires. Being a wise and loving Queen, she sometimes has to deny a wish, as she knows what is best for the little fairies.

On such a day, a little fairy asked for a doll, just like the ones mortal children have, with pretty dresses. The Queen pondered for a moment, as no one had ever asked for a doll in fairyland. She was puzzled about where to find one.

"Oh, dear Queen, we all would love to have a pretty doll to play with sometimes," pleaded all the fairies, gathering around their Queen.

"I will grant your wish on one condition," said the Queen. "You must put them away when you finish playing, for failure to do so will cause great trouble."

Each fairy promised faithfully to put away her doll once she was done playing. The Queen instructed them to meet her at midnight the following night to receive their dolls.

The next day, the little fairies were extremely busy. They fluttered about, diligently fulfilling their Queen's commands, ensuring not a single fairy was seen by mortals.

As the clock struck midnight the following night, all the fairies gathered in a dell, waiting for their Queen. She appeared and instructed them to follow her.

They flew over hills and valleys until they reached a magnificent garden filled with an array of flowers. The Queen led them past the flowers until they arrived at the tall hollyhocks standing by the stone wall at the garden's end.

"Here are your dolls, my dear fairies," the Queen declared. "Take one each."

The little fairies looked around, puzzled. "But where are the dolls?" they asked. "We only see flowers."

"The hollyhock flowers are your dolls," the Queen explained, touching each blossom with her wand. As she did, a tiny face appeared on each flower, and the blossom jumped from its place on the stalk.



The little fairies rejoiced and laughed with delight. Each had a doll with a beautifully colored dress—crimson, purple, white, and red. They proclaimed that no mortal child ever possessed such exquisite dolls.

"Now remember, you must put each doll back in its place once you finish playing," the Queen reminded them. "If I find one out of place, I shall take them away."

Throughout the night, the little fairies played with their hollyhock dolls in the garden, caring for them with utmost gentleness. Not a single doll was broken or had a torn dress. When the faint streaks of dawn appeared in the sky, the fairies returned the dolls to their designated spots on the tall stalks.

As the morning sun illuminated the garden, the hollyhocks bloomed more vibrantly than ever before. The Queen traversed the garden but found not a single doll out of place.

Every night, while the hollyhocks bloomed, if one could see with fairy eyes, they would witness the fairies gathering at midnight to play with their dolls beneath the flowers. And one would observe that each little fairy never forgot to put away her doll before returning home. This is why they could always find their dolls the next night, with their pretty dresses fresh and bright.

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