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A Legend of the Golden-Rod

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Once there were a great many weeds in a field. They were very ugly weeds, and they didn't seem to be the least bit of use in the world. The cows would not eat them, the children would not pick them, and even the bugs didn't seem to like them much.

"I don't see what we're here for," said one of the weeds. "We're no good."

"No good at all," grumbled a dozen little weeds. "Only good for catching dust."

"Well, if that's what we're here for," cried a very tall weed, "then let's catch dust! Somebody has to do it. We can't all grow blueberries or blossom into hollyhocks."

"But it isn't pleasant work at all," whined a tiny weed.

"No whining allowed in this field," laughed a funny little round weed with a hump in his stalk. "We're all going to catch dust, so let's see who can catch the most. How about a race?"

He spoke in such a jolly voice that the weeds all cheered up at once. Before long they were as busy as bees and as happy as Johnny-jump-ups. They stretched their stalks and spread out their fingers so well that before the summer was half over, they were catching every bit of dust that flew up from the road. In the clover field beyond, where the cows grazed, there wasn't a speck to be seen.

One morning, toward the end of summer, the weeds were surprised to see people standing by the fence, looking at them. Soon some children came and gazed at them too. Then the weeds noticed that people driving by were pointing them out to each other. They were very surprised. But they were more surprised still when, one day, some children climbed the fence and began to pick them.

"Look!" cried a little girl. "The dust has all turned to gold!"

The weeds looked at one another, and sure enough, they were covered with gold dust.

"A fairy must have done it," they whispered.

But the fairies were right there, and they said they'd had nothing to do with it.

"You did it yourselves," said the queen of the fairies. "You were happy in your work, and a cheerful spirit always turns dust into gold. Didn't you know?"



"You're not weeds anymore," the fairies sang. "You're flowers!"

"Golden-rod! Golden-rod!" shouted the children.

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