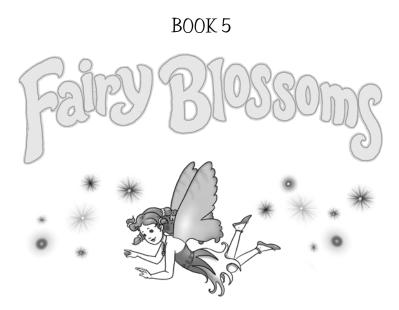
# Fairy Blossoms #5: Daisy and the First Wish

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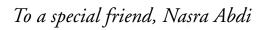
# Suzanne Williams



#### Daisy and the First Wish

#### By Suzanne Williams Illustrated by Fiona Sansom

## HarperCollins e-books







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8. Wishes

9. A Green Glow

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" oday's the day you've all been waiting for," Mistress Lily told the eight junior fairies as they sat down at their desks in Cloverleaf Cottage.

An excited murmur ran through the classroom. Daisy's heart began to beat fast. Were the fairies finally going to work with *humans*?

Daisy and her friends at Mistress Lily's

Fairy School had been practicing disguises for over a week to get ready for this. They could change themselves into human boys and girls or men and women. At first their disguises had flickered on and off like Flash, Marigold's pet firefly. But within a few days, their skills had improved. Now they could stay in disguise for up to two hours at a time!

Mistress Lily smiled at the fairies as she pushed back her long, golden hair. Her eyes were a deep blue, just like her gown. "I'm proud of you," she said. "You've learned so much since you arrived here. You can become invisible and you can take on human form. You can transform objects and design gowns." She paused. "Tomorrow we'll go to Blessings."

"About time," Poppy whispered in Daisy's ear. But she was grinning, obviously as delighted as Daisy at this announcement. Blessings was a human town.

Mistress Lily went on. "Tomorrow each of you will choose your first human to help."

Daisy clapped her tiny hands together. "Cool!" she exclaimed.

Everyone laughed, including Mistress Lily.

Daisy blushed.



Her teacher smiled. "I'm glad you're excited about this project, Daisy. So am I. There's only so much we can do in class. To learn more, you'll need experience."

Daisy nodded. She'd been wanting to practice on a human ever since school began. She couldn't wait to put her skills to use.

After breakfast the next morning, the fairies boarded a golden carriage shaped like an acorn. Flash got to come along too. Bink, a brownie servant with reddish-brown hair and freckles, hooked up the carriage to three winged ponies. "Have fun!" he called to the fairies. "See you at lunchtime."

The ponies flapped their wings and lifted off. Soon the carriage was sailing over the forest that lay between Cloverleaf Cottage and Blessings. When they landed, Mistress Lily cast an invisibility spell over the carriage and the ponies. The spell made the fairies



invisible too. It would shield them from human eyes but not from one another.

"You'll have to stay in the carriage," Marigold told Flash as the fairies climbed down. The firefly's wings went all droopy, but he obeyed Marigold and dutifully curled up on a carriage bench. "Follow me," said Mistress Lily. She fluttered her wings and flew toward the center of town. The junior fairies darted after her like a swarm of butterflies.

Along the way, they passed a yellow house. Compared to Cloverleaf Cottage, it was huge. Yet it was smaller than the other human houses around it. A young mother sat in a rocking chair on the porch, singing to her baby as they rocked back and forth. "She looks happy," said Poppy.

Daisy nodded. "I'm glad." The fairies had met the young mother the first week of school. She hadn't been very happy then. She had complained that her baby's looks kept changing, and in very odd ways. As it turned out, the woman was right! Daisy and her friends solved the mystery, and the triplets—Heather, Hyacinth, and Holly put things straight. Daisy flew backward so that she could continue watching the yellow house.

"Look out!" Poppy yelled suddenly.

It was too late. With an *oof*, Daisy smacked right into Rose. The two fairies tumbled through the air for several seconds before they finally righted themselves.



"Sorry, Rose," said Daisy as they began to fly again. "Are you okay?"

"I think so." Rose smoothed back her jetblack ringlets. Then she set her silver tiara on top of her head again. "How are you?"

"I'm fine," said Daisy. "Sorry I'm such a klutz."

Rose smiled, fluttering her sparkly pink wings. "It was an accident." Quickly, the two fairies caught up with the rest of the class.

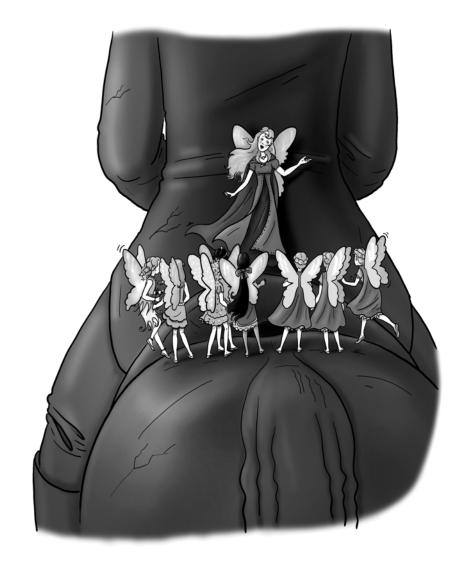


### Choosing a Human

istress Lily landed in the town square on top of a statue of a man riding a horse. The fairies settled along the stone horse's back. "Today you will just be *watching* humans," Mistress Lily said.

"Petal rot!" Poppy whispered.

Daisy was disappointed too. She'd been



hoping they could start granting wishes right away!

"Take your time," Mistress Lily continued. "Think hard about whom you might like to help. Then tomorrow—after you've made your choice—we'll return here."

"But what if I choose the wrong person?" Violet asked. Her large brown eyes looked worried.

"You won't," Mistress Lily assured her. "The right human will just sort of *click* with you—like friends often do." Daisy and Poppy smiled at each other. They'd clicked from the very first moment they met.

"How old should our humans be?" Rose asked.

Mistress Lily thought for a moment. "No younger than five, I think."

"But I wanted to choose a baby," said Heather. She and her two sisters were crazy about babies and wanted to be birth fairies.

"Babies need help too," Holly said.

"I'm sorry," said Mistress Lily. "I know you want to work with babies. But for now I want you to choose humans who are old enough to be clear about their desires."

Privately, Daisy thought babies were *very* clear about their desires. They cry when they're unhappy. They let you know when something's wrong.

"You'll have an hour before you need to return here," Mistress Lily continued. "Travel in pairs, please. Keep your eyes and ears open. Try to find someone you could help with just a little magic."

Before the fairies left, Mistress Lily collected their wands. "I'll give them back when you return," she said.

"Why can't we keep them?" asked Heather as she handed over hers. It was silver and studded with tiny pearls.

Mistress Lily smiled. "Because I don't want you to be tempted to use them."

Heather blushed. She and her sisters had gotten into trouble performing magic in Blessings before.

Buzzing like honeybees, the fairies fluttered off the stone horse's back. Daisy and



Poppy flew side by side. Soon they saw some children walking along a sidewalk. Most of them were carrying books. "Where do you suppose they're going?" Daisy asked.

"To school, I bet," Poppy replied.

"Oh," Daisy said in surprise. She hadn't realized that human children went to school too. But now that she thought about it, she supposed they couldn't sit around all day waiting for fairies to show up and grant their wishes!

"Let's follow them," Poppy suggested.

"Sure," Daisy said eagerly. The two invisible fairies flew just above the children's heads. Most were walking in pairs or in groups. But Daisy noticed one girl walking alone. She looked about Daisy's age—nine years old. Skinny as a wand, she seemed to be all knees and elbows as she stumbled along, reading a book.



Suddenly she plowed into a pair of girls walking ahead of her.

"Ow!" cried one of them. She whirled around. "Watch where you're going, Nina!"

"Sorry, Hazel," Nina mumbled.

Hazel glanced at Nina's book. "Don't read and walk at the same time. It's too hard for you." She grinned. "Right, Ruth?" she said to her friend.

Nina's face turned red. "Sorry," she mumbled again.

"Let's go," said Ruth. Looking at Nina, she shrugged, as if to apologize for Hazel's rudeness.

Nina started to walk again, her eyes on her feet this time. Daisy knew a fellow klutz when she saw one. *"Nina,"* Daisy whispered softly. She liked how the name sounded. Perhaps *this* was the human she was meant to help.



#### Inside the School

aisy followed Nina into the school yard. But where was Poppy? Daisy zipped over the heads of all the children waiting in line outside the school.

"Psst. Over here!" a voice near the door called out.

There was Poppy! She was perched on the brim of a cowboy hat. Wearing the hat was a tall, skinny boy whose hands and feet



looked much too big for his body. Daisy guessed he was older than Nina—maybe twelve or thirteen years old.

A bell rang. Seconds later the door to the school opened and the children filed into the room, including the boy with the cowboy hat. Daisy expected Poppy to fly back out, but she didn't. When all the children had entered, the teacher started to close the door. Quickly, Daisy zipped inside.

The school was just one big room, with children of all different ages. They sat at double desks. The boy with the cowboy hat shared his desk with another boy. Poppy waved to Daisy from atop the first boy's hat, and Daisy waved back. Nina sat in front of the two boys.

No one was sharing *her* desk.

At the head of the room, a young teacher was writing on a board. In a moment she turned around. "Take off your hat, please, John," she said.

"Sorry, ma'am," said the boy with the cowboy hat. "I forgot." Poppy leaped from the brim as he swept off his hat and hung it from the back of his chair. Fluttering her wings, Poppy flew across the room to hover next to Daisy. The teacher began a reading lesson. One by one, the students stood and read from their books. When it was Nina's turn to read, she banged her knee getting up from her desk. "Ow!" she cried. Daisy felt a sympathetic twinge in *her* knee too. It was like there was a connection between them!

"Are you all right?" the teacher asked.

Nodding, Nina rubbed her knee. Then she read a passage from her book. She read it perfectly and with lots of expression.



Daisy beamed with pride. "Good, isn't she?" she whispered to Poppy.

"Sh," said Poppy. "It's John's turn now."

John wasn't as good a reader as Nina. When he pronounced *fortune* as "for-toon," the teacher corrected him. "FOR-chin," she said.

"With more time he would have gotten it," said Poppy. Daisy wondered if John reminded Poppy of her brothers. But regardless, it seemed they had both found the humans they wanted to help.

The two fairies continued to watch Nina and John until Daisy realized their hour was almost up. "Oh dear," she said. "We'd better get back!"

They flew to the door, but of course it was closed. And it was much too large and heavy for two tiny fairies to open. All the windows were closed too. No problem, thought Daisy. She would just cast a spell to open one. She reached for her wand—then she remembered that Mistress Lily had kept them all! Daisy gulped. "How are we going to get out?"

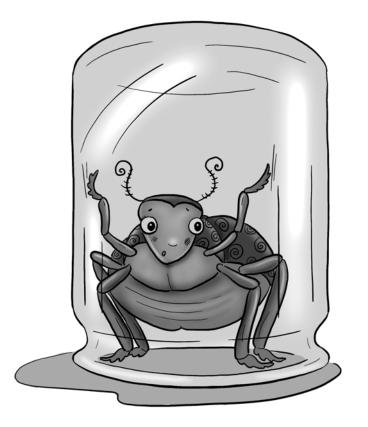
"Don't worry," said Poppy. "I'll get us out." She shape-shifted into a big green beetle. Poppy was half pixie, and pixies are good at shape-shifting. And they don't need a wand to do it.

Unfortunately, when Poppy shape-shifted she became visible.

"Yuck! A beetle!" Hazel screamed. All the children jumped up from their desks and raced over to see it.

Poppy scuttled toward the crack under the door. She hadn't gotten far when she was surrounded by pairs of feet. Still invisible, Daisy dove down to rescue her friend. But before she could get there, the teacher ran up. "Got you!" she said, popping a glass jar over the top of the beetle.

Daisy's heart sank as she stared at her friend through the glass. How would they ever get back now? And what would happen to Poppy?





Class Pet

he teacher turned the jar upright, and Poppy fell to the bottom. The children gathered around to peer at the big green beetle. Poppy's six legs slipped on the glass as she tried to scramble up the sides. Daisy hovered nearby. How could she rescue Poppy?

Nina looked worried. "What are you

going to do with it, Miss Eden?"

"I don't know," the teacher replied. "Any ideas?"

"Kill it," said Hazel. "It's ugly."

Daisy sucked in her breath, but



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fortunately the teacher didn't pay much attention to Hazel.

"Let's keep it," said a small boy with dimples. "It can be our class pet."

"Yes. Let's!" cried several of the other students.

"I think we should let it go," said Nina.

Daisy was pleased to hear her say this, but the other students scowled at Nina.

"Why should we?" asked the boy who sat next to John.

Nina shrugged. "I wouldn't like to be kept in a glass jar, would you?"

Several children laughed.

John shuffled his feet. "I think we should let it go too," he said. "My dad says most beetles are useful. They eat weeds and bad bugs that feed on crops."

"Hmm," said Miss Eden. "You've both

made good points." Seeming to make up her mind, she stepped toward the door. The children groaned, except for Nina and John.

Daisy's spirits lifted. She flew alongside the jar. As Miss Eden opened the door, Daisy followed her outside. "Say good-bye to the beetle, children," said the teacher.

"Good-bye, beetle," they called out.

Stooping, the teacher held the jar low and tilted it toward the ground. Poppy crawled out quickly and scuttled under a bush. When the door had closed behind Miss Eden, Poppy reappeared as her fairy self and was once again invisible to humans. "Phew," she said, "that was close!"

"You can say that again," said Daisy. "We'd better hurry. Everyone will be waiting!"

The two fairies flew back to the statue in



the town square. "You're late," Mistress Lily said sternly. At the same time, she looked relieved to see them.

"Sorry about that," said Poppy. "We ran into a little problem. You see—"

"Tell us later," Mistress Lily interrupted, but not unkindly. "Let's get back to Cloverleaf Cottage. Lunch will be waiting."

When they climbed inside the carriage, Flash flickered his green light in greeting and darted from fairy to fairy. Marigold laughed. "Calm down, Flash." As they began the journey home, he settled next to her on a satin-covered bench.

The fairies chattered about their project. Everyone had found someone to



help. "Remember the young mother in the yellow house?" said Hyacinth. "I've chosen her."

"And Heather and I are going to help these other two mothers we saw," said Holly.

"Let me guess," Rose said. "They all have babies, right?"

The sisters giggled. "Well, of course!" said Heather.

Marigold had chosen a teenager named Emily, and Violet had decided to help a little boy. "His name is Jake," she said. "He just turned five and he's adorable, with blond curls and big blue eyes."

Daisy leaned forward. "Who's your human, Rose?"

"An older woman named Tillie," she replied. "She runs a bookshop in town and lives right above it."

"Cool," said Daisy. "I bet Nina would

love to live over a bookshop. She's a terrific reader."

"Who's Nina?" asked Rose.

Daisy explained about the children she and Poppy had followed to school. And Poppy told about shape-shifting into a beetle and getting trapped in a jar. "If Nina and John hadn't urged the teacher to set Poppy free, we might never have escaped," Daisy said.

"Sounds like those two are *really* deserving of help," said Rose.

Daisy nodded. She thought so too. And she could hardly wait to grant Nina's wishes—whatever they might be.



A Favor

he next morning the fairies practiced their human disguises one last time. It was after lunch before they left for Blessings.

When Daisy and Poppy reached the school yard, the children were outside at recess. Invisible, the fairies fluttered up to the playground. "Look! There's John!" Poppy exclaimed. He was kicking a ball around with some other boys, in a field next to the school. Poppy flew off to watch them. "See you later!"

Daisy looked around for Nina. She wasn't skipping rope with Hazel and Ruth and the other girls. Nor was she out on the field with the boys. Finally Daisy spotted Nina sitting alone under a tree. Her head was bent and her straight brown hair fell across her face. She was writing with a stick in a patch of dirt.



Daisy fluttered to a branch over Nina's head. She parted some leaves with her tiny hands and peered down at what Nina had scratched into the dirt. *I'm lonely,* Nina had written. *I wish I had a friend.* With a sigh, Nina swept the words away.

Oh dear, thought Daisy. Poor Nina needed help! Daisy couldn't wave her wand and magic up a friend for her, but perhaps she could grant a simpler wish that would cheer Nina up. She could try anyway. After all, if Nina hadn't spoken up yesterday, Poppy might still be in a jar!

Daisy fluttered to the ground. This was her chance to meet Nina. She would disguise herself as a human girl, she thought. There was no need to change her looks; she could just make herself *bigger*.

Hiding behind the tree, Daisy tapped

herself with her wand. The invisibility spell broke, and instantly she became a humansized girl. How odd it was to be so big and tall! Looking down at herself, she wondered if she should change her clothes. None of the girls in Nina's class were wearing a sleeveless yellow top and a white skirt with a curling zigzag hem. Mostly the girls wore long dresses with lace collars and aprons. And their shoes looked sturdier than the golden ones with delicate ankle straps that Daisy wore. But before she could transform her clothes, the bell rang.

Nina stood to leave. Daisy panicked. She had to catch Nina before she went inside the school! So Daisy stepped from behind the tree. "Excuse me," she said. "Could you help me, please?"

Nina whirled around. Her eyes grew wide

as she took in Daisy's clothes. "I've never seen *you* before," she said. "Who are you?"

"Daisy," said Daisy. She didn't think there was any reason to change her name.

"You must be new in town," Nina said. Suddenly she sounded cheerful. "I've only been here a few days myself."



Aha! thought Daisy. So that was why Nina had no friends. She hadn't had time to make any yet! Daisy smiled. Now she was supposed to ask a favor to see if Nina was worthy of fairy help. Daisy already knew she was, but to do things correctly she said, "Could you please tell me how to find the road out of town? I'm lost."

To her surprise, Nina's cheerfulness melted away. "I guess you're not staying, then." Her shoulders slumped. Sighing, she pointed right. "Go that way until you get to the town square. Then you'll see a road that heads out of town."

"Thanks," said Daisy. She turned as if to go.

"Say, what are those things on your back, sticking out through your shirt?" asked Nina.

Oh dear, thought Daisy. She'd forgotten

about her wings! They were still fairy-sized, no larger than butterfly wings, but big enough to be seen.

Daisy faced Nina again. "Listen, I don't want to startle you, but I'm not really a human girl at all. Those things on my back are wings. I'm a *fairy*." She waited for Nina to cry out and run away, but instead Nina's face broke into a huge smile.

"You can't really fly with those tiny wings, can you?" she asked.

Daisy blushed. "When I'm my real size, they're big enough." Drawing out her wand, she tapped herself three times. In a burst of gold glitter, she shrank down to her true size and became hidden in the grass around the base of the tree.

"Hey, where did you go?" Nina asked, looking around. "Here I am." Daisy flew up until she was level with Nina's nose.

Nina beamed at her. "Great! I've always wanted to meet a fairy!"





## **Trading Stories**

've read lots of stories about fairies," Nina continued. "You're a flower fairy, aren't you?"

"That's right," said Daisy. "And I'm here to help you—if you'd like me to."

Nina cocked her head. "You mean you're a . . . a *fairy godmother*?"

"A fairy *helper*," said Daisy. "And I'm still training."

"Fantastic!" Nina exclaimed. "Just wait till I tell the class!"

"Oh no," Daisy said in alarm. "Don't do that. This has to be a secret between us."

Nina slapped her forehead with the palm of her hand. "Of course," she said. "I've read enough stories to know that."

"Good." Daisy breathed a sigh of relief.

Nina glanced around at the empty playground. "I'd better go now. If I stay out much longer, my teacher will get upset."

"You won't get in trouble, will you?" Daisy asked worriedly. She was supposed to *help* Nina, not make things hard for her.

"I'll be okay," Nina assured her. "When will I see you again?"

"Tomorrow," said Daisy. "Then we can talk about wishes."

Nina smiled. "Okay."

After Nina went inside, Daisy found

Poppy. As they flew back to the town square, Poppy grinned. "When I talked to John in disguise, he said he didn't believe in fairies."

"Really?" said Daisy. "How strange."

"That's exactly what *I* said. But then I shed my disguise. Boy, was *he* surprised!"

Once all the fairies had met at the statue, they flew back to the carriage together. As always, Flash was overjoyed to see them again.

While the ponies sped toward Cloverleaf Cottage, the junior fairies traded stories about their humans. Marigold fluttered her orangeand-blue-striped wings—a perfect match with her orange silk top and blossom-shaped blue skirt. "Emily thinks I have *style*. She said I was *cute*." Flash nuzzled Marigold's cheek, as if to say he agreed. "Did I tell you she's a teenager?" Marigold said. "I bet she'll wish



for a new gown. I hope so anyway. I'd really like to make her one."

Before long the carriage landed. Bink came from the stable to take care of the ponies as Mistress Lily climbed down from the driver's seat. The junior fairies tumbled out and gathered around her.

"Listen up, everyone," Mistress Lily said. "Tomorrow you will each grant your chosen humans one wish."

"Petal rot," said Poppy. "Only one?"

Mistress Lily smiled. "It's good to start slow. And if your human asks for something that requires more magic than you can do, ask them to make a different wish."

Daisy hoped she wouldn't have to do that. She didn't want to disappoint Nina.

Before the fairies flew to the cottage, Mistress Lily said, "Be ready to leave right after breakfast tomorrow morning. We'll spend the whole day in Blessings and return in the late afternoon. That should give you plenty of time to finish this project."

"I wish it was tomorrow morning already,"

said Daisy, as she and Poppy flitted inside for dinner.

Poppy grinned. "So do I. But unless you know enough magic to *make* it tomorrow, we'll just have to wait."





## The Blue House

orning seemed to take forever to arrive, but at last the fairies were back in Blessings. Daisy rubbed her tiny hands together as she and Poppy flew toward the school. "This is going to be such fun!" she said. She couldn't wait to grant Nina a wish.

"There's John!" Poppy exclaimed. "See you later!" She fluttered down to the brim of his cowboy hat.

As she watched for Nina, Daisy's heart beat fast. But when the school bell rang, Nina had still not appeared. Miss Eden opened the door to welcome the children. Daisy peered past her, wondering if Nina had somehow slipped inside without Daisy seeing her. But Nina wasn't there.



Daisy's wings drooped. Where could Nina be? She flew along the sidewalk that led up to the school, but no more children came along. After passing a dozen houses, she came upon a blue one with white shutters. Voices were drifting from the open window. One of them was Nina's! "Please, Mother," she begged. "I *have* to go to school today!" Then she had a coughing fit.

"No, you don't," her mother replied. "Not with that cough. Now you get right back in bed. I don't want to hear another word about it."

Daisy flew to the window and saw Nina climb obediently into bed. She pulled a greenand-blue-patterned quilt up to her chin. "Good girl," said her mother. Suddenly she took a step toward the window, seeming to look straight at Daisy. Daisy nearly cried out. Then she remembered she was still invisible. "No wonder you've got a cough," Nina's mother said. "You've been sleeping with your window open." As she reached to shut it, Daisy zipped through. She landed on top of a little table next to Nina's bed.

After Nina's mother left, Nina began to cry. "Now I won't get to see Daisy," she whimpered.



"Sh," Daisy said. "I'm here." With a tap of her wand, she made herself visible in a burst of gold glitter.

Nina squealed with joy. "You found me!"



She held out her hand. Daisy perched on it like a little bird. "I can grant you one wish," said Daisy. "But it has to be for something simple—like clothes or jewels, for example."

Nina coughed again. "I know," she said. "I've read lots of stories. But the thing is . . ." Her voice trailed off.

"Yes?" said Daisy.

Nina shrugged. "I don't really want those things."

"Oh." Daisy couldn't help feeling a little disappointed. Making a gown for Nina would have been fun.

"Could you tell me about the place where you live?" Nina asked. She drew her knees up under her quilt, then gently set Daisy on top. "I'll try to think of a wish while we talk."

"All right." Daisy sat cross-legged on the quilt. Then she told Nina about Cloverleaf Cottage and what fairy school was like. Nina's eyes widened when Daisy told her that the green beetle Nina's teacher had trapped was really another fairy.

"Poppy's half pixie. She can shape-shift," said Daisy.

"Fantastic," said Nina. "Is Poppy your best friend?"

Daisy nodded. Laughing, she told Nina about how she'd fallen into a stream the very first time she and Poppy met.

"Weren't you embarrassed?" Nina asked.

"Sure," said Daisy. "But then Poppy and I started to talk, and . . . well . . . we've been friends ever since."

Nina sighed. "I had a lot of friends before I moved here. I really miss them."

A wave of sadness washed over Daisy. Was that what Nina was feeling? "You'll make new friends," Daisy said gently. "Maybe," said Nina. She sounded doubtful.

At noon, Nina's mother came in with a lunch tray. Daisy made herself invisible until she left. Then Nina shared her lunch, giving Daisy little bites of her cheese sandwich. Nina still couldn't think of a wish though.

After lunch Nina asked more questions. Daisy enjoyed talking with her. But when she realized how late it was getting, she stood up and stretched her wings. "I'm afraid I have to go. But first I must grant you a wish."

"Please don't go," Nina begged. "I don't know what to wish for yet. Can't you stay and talk longer?"

Daisy hesitated. She didn't want to be late. Without giving it much thought, she said, "Maybe I could come back later this evening."

Nina's face lit up. "Really? That would be

great!" Hopping out of bed, she opened the window for Daisy. "See you later," she said.

Daisy waved to Nina, then flitted toward the town square. She didn't really want to fly back to Blessings that night, but what else could she do? She couldn't disappoint Nina, and besides, she had to finish her project. Who would have guessed that just getting Nina to *make* a wish would turn out to be so hard!





" mily *loved* the silk gown I made for her," Marigold exclaimed during the carriage ride back to the cottage. She patted Flash on the head. "It was lime green—just like your light," she told him. Flash whirred his approval and flickered his light.

"Tillie wished for a new hat," Rose said. "She asked for a plain blue one, but I fancied it up with a purple satin ribbon and peacock feathers. She was so pleased when she put it on that she couldn't stop looking at herself in the mirror!"

Daisy tried to smile. Was she the only fairy whose human hadn't yet made a wish? Poppy had already told her what John had wished for: a bicycle. And the triplets had made *toys*—a winged rocking horse, a fairy doll, and a fancy rattle. They had suggested the toys, since the mothers hadn't wanted anything for themselves.

"How about you, Violet?" asked Rose. "What did Jake wish for?"

Daisy held her breath. She couldn't help hoping that Violet's human hadn't made a wish yet, either. But he had, of course. Daisy barely listened as Violet described how she had transformed an old tin can into a play fort.

Daisy wondered what she had done

wrong. Maybe she should have made some suggestions too.

Marigold leaned toward her. "You haven't told us what Nina wished for."

Reluctantly, Daisy replied, "She hasn't made her wish yet."

The other fairies looked surprised. "Really?" said Heather. "Why not?"

Daisy sighed. "She's still thinking about what she wants."

"But we were supposed to finish the project today," said Violet. "What are you going to do?"

"I'll return tonight," said Daisy.

"Would you like some of us to go with you?" Rose asked kindly.

"Thanks," said Daisy. "But I want to do this myself."

After dinner, while the other junior fairies played a game of tag with Flash, Daisy flew

off to Blessings. She could have traveled faster by pony. But she would have had to ask permission to take one. She didn't want to tell Mistress Lily she hadn't yet granted a wish.

It was dusk when Daisy arrived at the blue house with white shutters. Nina had left her window open just wide enough for Daisy to squeeze through. Nina was sitting in a chair,



reading a book. She must have heard the flutter of Daisy's wings because she looked up when Daisy entered the room. "You're back!" she squealed. "I was afraid you wouldn't return."

Daisy felt a little insulted. "I told you I'd come."

"I know," said Nina, closing her book. "But I was afraid you might change your mind."

Daisy settled on top of the book. "Why would I do that?"

Nina shrugged. "Because I'm taking too long to think of a wish."

"That's okay," said Daisy. She glanced at the upside-down letters of the book's title. "*Cinderella*," she read out loud.

Nina smiled. "It's my favorite story." She paused. "I liked hearing about your friend



Poppy. Will you tell me more about her and your other fairy friends?"

"Sure," said Daisy. "What do you want to know?"

"Everything," said Nina.

Daisy smiled. Then, one by one, she described each of the junior fairies. Nina seemed to love hearing about them. She giggled when Daisy told her about the baby-crazy triplets and sighed at Daisy's description of the elegant Rose. When Daisy talked about how shy Violet was, especially when she first arrived at the cottage, Nina nodded. "I've felt like that too." Then suddenly she asked, "Do you like being a fairy?"

"Yes, of course," said Daisy.

"It must be fun to fly and do magic," Nina said. She paused. "What if I wish *I* was a fairy?"

Daisy shook her head. "You'll need to wish for something simpler."

"Oh well," said Nina. "It would have been fun though."

"Don't you like being a human girl?" Daisy asked.

"It's okay," said Nina. "But I'd rather be a fairy. Besides, your friends sound nice." "They are," said Daisy. She thought about what Nina had written in the dirt and suddenly she knew how she could give Nina what she *really* wanted and needed. "Would you like to meet my friends?" she asked.

Nina clapped her hands together. "Could I? When?"

"Tomorrow," said Daisy. Her plan just *had* to work!



he sky was dark as Daisy flew toward Cloverleaf Cottage. An owl hooted, sending shivers down her spine. What if he mistook her for a mouse? The forest was so thick that even with a glowing wand to light her way, Daisy kept bumping into trees. Just when she was afraid she'd gotten lost, she saw a green glow. Could it be?



"Flash!" she cried out. Wings whirring, he flew straight to her and nuzzled her cheek. "She's here!" voices sang out. Soon the seven other junior fairies appeared. Poppy gave Daisy a big hug. "You were gone for too long," she said. "We got worried about you."

"Sorry," said Daisy. "I didn't mean to make you worry." She felt happy to have friends who cared about her so much.

The fairies started back toward the cottage. Flash darted around them, his green light flickering. "So what did Nina wish for?" asked Marigold.

"She wanted to be a fairy," Daisy said, "just like us."

Violet's large brown eyes grew even larger. "But that's impossible."

"I know," said Daisy. "What she really wants are friends. And I think I know how I could help her." Daisy told the fairies her plan.

"You can count me in," said Poppy. The other fairies said they would help too. It was time for bed when they arrived at the cottage. Daisy's wings ached from flying so far. She curled up on top of her flower and fell asleep within moments.



When she awoke the next morning, her first thoughts were of Mistress Lily. Daisy dreaded having to tell her teacher that she hadn't yet finished her assignment. But what else could she do?

Bink served blackberry scones for breakfast. They were a specialty of the cottage's hobgoblin baker, and they smelled heavenly. "Goody!" Marigold exclaimed.



"I *love* Hobart's scones!" She piled five onto her plate.

Daisy took two. As she bit into the first one, Mistress Lily fluttered down from the balcony to land near the table. Daisy wondered why she had come. She didn't usually eat with the junior fairies.

"Good morning," said Mistress Lily. "I'm sorry to interrupt your breakfast. I wanted to let you know that I've decided to delay classes until after lunch today. I need to finish a report for the Fairy Education Board."

What luck! thought Daisy. If the junior fairies left for Blessings right away, they could see Nina before their next class. "Would it be okay to take the ponies out this morning?" she asked. Traveling would be so much faster that way.

Mistress Lily nodded. "Fine. But wherever

you go, make sure you're back in time for lunch."

It wasn't long before all eight of the junior fairies were soaring toward Blessings on the backs of the three winged ponies. When they



landed at the edge of Blessings, the fairies made themselves and the ponies invisible. Then they headed for the school. Daisy hoped Nina would be there. Her cough had seemed better when Daisy visited her last night.

School had already started when the fairies arrived at the school grounds. They peeked into the classroom through a window. Fortunately, Nina had come. Daisy pointed her out to the other fairies.

"Nina doesn't have a desk partner," Marigold observed. "That's sad."

"Yes," Daisy agreed. But if her plan worked, Nina's popularity would get just the boost it needed.



# Fairies in Disguise

"Or ollow me," said Daisy. The fairies flew behind the school. It was private there—a little grassy yard backed up to a high wooden fence. All the fairies pulled out their wands and tapped themselves. Glitter flew everywhere. Instantly they shed their wings and shot up to become human-sized girls, wearing human clothing just like the girls in class.



"Jumping juniper!" Poppy exclaimed, staring down at her long green dress. "It must be a mile from my head to my toes!"

"Do I look okay?" asked Rose. She was wearing a frilly pink apron over a dress that was just like the gray one Nina was wearing.

"Terrific," said Daisy, though most of the

human girls' aprons were white, not pink. "But perhaps you'd better get rid of the silver tiara."

"Oops," said Rose. She touched the tiara with her wand and it vanished in a burst of silver glitter.

Daisy looked the other fairies over. The triplets' matching alphabet-print aprons were even more unusual than Rose's choice of pink, but Daisy decided to let that pass. "The class will be coming outside to play soon," she said. "Let's go."

They marched around to the front of the school. Seconds later, the recess bell rang. Miss Eden opened the door. She stared at the eight girls lined up outside. "My goodness," she said. "Are you all here to join our class?"

Daisy shook her head. "We can only stay for a little while. We came to see Nina, please. We're friends of hers." By now everyone had gathered in the doorway to stare at the new girls. Daisy smiled and waved at Nina. She grinned and waved back.

"How nice of you to visit," said Miss Eden. "I'm sure Nina has missed you all. But shouldn't you be in school yourselves?"

Daisy gulped. "We're . . . um . . . on vacation," she said.

To her surprise, Miss Eden seemed to accept this explanation. Smiling, she turned toward Nina. "Why don't you introduce us to your friends?"

Oh no! thought Daisy. But she needn't have worried. Nina had memorized every single detail about the fairies that Daisy had told her. She didn't have any trouble identifying them at all! She could even tell which triplet was which.

John had been staring at Poppy ever since

the disguised fairies appeared. When Nina introduced her, he blurted out, "But I *know* you. You're a f—"

"Friend?" Poppy interrupted smoothly. There was a warning tone in her voice as she added, "Of course we're friends. But today I'm here to visit Nina."

The boy who shared John's desk nudged him and grinned. "She your girlfriend?"



John's face turned as pink as Rose's apron.

The human girls were curious about Nina's friends. "How come you all have flower names?" Hazel asked. "I think that's really strange."

Poppy shrugged. "A hazel is a *tree*, right?" Hazel blushed.

Smiling a little, Ruth looked at Nina. "Would you and your friends like to jump rope with us?"

Hazel frowned at the offer, but Ruth didn't seem to notice.

"Sure," said Daisy. She'd never jumped rope before—none of the fairies had—but she thought it might be fun.

"Hazel and I will twirl the rope," said Ruth, ignoring the look Hazel shot her. "You can go first, Nina."

"Okay," said Nina. She invited Daisy and Poppy to join her. Daisy immediately got tangled in the rope and everyone had to stop and try again. After a while, however, she began to get the hang of it.

Heather, Hyacinth, and Holly were delighted with the jump rope rhyme Nina taught them. "Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around," they chanted together. "Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground." Nina showed



the fairies different ways to jump. *Scissors* meant jumping with one foot forward and one foot back, then switching back and forth. Nina also taught them jumping jacks and cancan jumps.

"You're a good jumper, Nina," Hazel admitted grudgingly.

Everyone took turns jumping, including Ruth and Hazel. By the end of recess all the girls were laughing and talking together. When it was time for the students to go inside, Nina hugged each of the fairy girls in turn. "Thanks for coming," she said. Then she whispered something in Daisy's ear.

Daisy smiled. "I'm glad."

The girls waved good-bye to one another. Then Hazel and Ruth linked arms with Nina and walked back to the schoolhouse.

"What did Nina whisper?" Poppy asked after the girls had shed their disguises and were flying back to Cloverleaf Cottage on the ponies.

"Meeting you was a wish come true," said Daisy. She had memorized every word.





fter lunch the fairies flew up to the balcony. Mistress Lily was still working on her report. "While I'm finishing, you can write reports too," she said.

The fairies groaned—all except Rose. She actually *liked* writing reports.

Mistress Lily smiled. "Come, come," she said. "This will be fun! You can write me a letter if you'd rather. Tell me all about your humans, what they wished for, and how the wish granting went. I want to know everything." She passed out paper, then returned to her office at the back of the balcony.

Daisy reached for her favorite hummingbird-feather pen. She dipped the tip into a tiny jar of blueberry ink. *Dear* 



*Mistress Lily,* she began. She was astonished at how easily words tumbled out of her pen. By the time class was over, she had written more pages than anyone else, including Rose.

But Daisy couldn't help feeling worried. She wondered what Mistress Lily would think when she read her report. Daisy had finished her project late, after all. She'd also gotten help from the other fairies. And except for her human disguise, she hadn't used magic. She had never really granted Nina a proper wish! The more Daisy thought about it, the more she convinced herself that Mistress Lily wouldn't like what she'd done.

So Daisy wasn't surprised when Mistress Lily asked to see her after dinner. Daisy's stomach had a knot the size of an acorn in it as she flew over the balcony and knocked on Mistress Lily's door.

"Come in," said her teacher. She was sitting at her desk with a stack of papers in front of her.

Daisy gulped. Hers was on top!



Mistress Lily picked it up. "Your report was excellent," she said.

Relief flowed through Daisy. "Thank you," she said. "I know I didn't finish the project on time, but . . ."

Mistress Lily waved her hand in the air. "Sometimes things take longer than you think."

Daisy smiled. "I hoped Nina would make a simple wish," she said. "I couldn't change her into a fairy."

Mistress Lily laughed. "No, of course not." Then her face grew serious. "It's a gift to be able to see beyond magic to what a human really needs." She paused. "Not many fairies have that gift, Daisy, but you do. You knew what Nina needed even when she didn't know it herself."

Daisy considered this. Then she nodded

slowly. "Nina thought she wanted to be a fairy," she said, "but what she really needed were friends—*human* friends."

"That's right," said Mistress Lily. She tapped Daisy's report. "And thanks to you, I think she'll have those now, don't you?"

"Yes," said Daisy. "I hope so, anyway."

Even without help, Nina would have made friends in class sooner or later, Daisy thought as she left Mistress Lily's office. But maybe that wasn't the point. After all, Cinderella might have gotten her prince without the fancy dress and glass slippers. Perhaps a fairy helper's job was just to nudge things in the right direction—with or without the use of magic.

Daisy smiled to herself. She was thrilled to have helped her first human. Becoming a full-fledged fairy helper would take a while, but she looked forward to each step of the way.



### **About the Author**

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