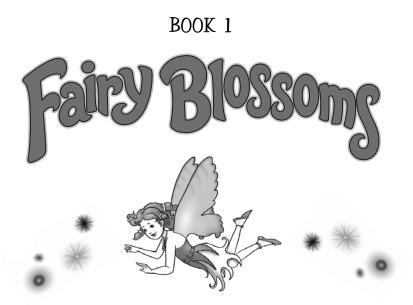
## HarperCollins e-books

# Fairy Blossoms #1: Daisy and the Magic Lesson

# Suzanne Williams

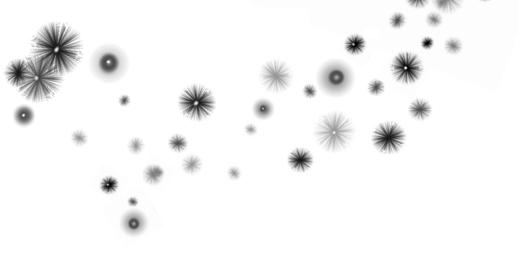


## Daisy and the Magic Lesson

#### By Suzanne Williams Illustrated by Fiona Sansom

#### HarperCollins e-books

#### To my agent, Liza Pulitzer Voges, with many thanks



# Contents

1. Cloverleaf Cottage	1
2. Violet and Marigold	11
3. The First Class	20
4. Winged Ponies	30
5. Marigold's Story	38
6. Field Trip	46
7. The Yellow House	58
8. A Plan	63
9. The Most Beautiful Baby	70
10. The Return	78

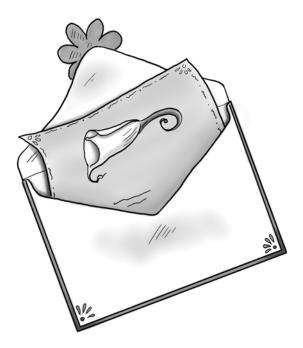
About the Author Credits Cover Copyright About the Publisher



aisy stood before the gate to Cloverleaf Village. Her wings quivered with excitement—and maybe just a touch of nerves. For almost the hundredth time, she unfolded the letter from Mistress Lily's Fairy School. Holding it tight in her tiny hands, she read it again: Dear Daisy,

I am pleased to let you know that you have been accepted to train as a junior fairy helper. A spot is being held for you at Cloverleaf Cottage. Please report tomorrow. Instruction begins at 10:00 A.M.

Sincerely, Mistress Lily



Daisy still couldn't believe she had been chosen to attend. Studying to become a fairy helper was her dearest dream. "Here I come!" she said out loud. Then she unlatched the gate and stepped inside.

"Oooh," Daisy sighed. Stretching ahead of her was a lovely wide path, curving through pink-blossomed clover that was just as tall as Daisy. A dozen or more fairy houses and shops faced the path on either side. Several fairies flitted to and fro above the path or tended colorful gardens in front of their houses and shops.

Daisy breathed in the sweet scent of roses and lilies. Fluttering her wings, she skimmed down the path. It ended at a golden bridge that crossed over a crystal-clear stream. The bridge's rails sparkled with rubies, diamonds, and emeralds.

"How beautiful!" Daisy exclaimed. She set

down her bundle and ran her delicate fingers over the jewels. Then she climbed onto a rail for a better view of the school, which was just on the other side.

Cloverleaf Cottage, as the school building was called, was nestled among the roots of an enormous oak tree. Like most fairy dwellings, the cottage was made of packed earth and twigs. Clover covered the steeply



sloped sides of the A-frame cottage. "Hi!"

The voice startled Daisy and she lost her balance. She flapped her wings to steady herself, but it was too late. She toppled into the stream with a splash. When she sat up in the water, Daisy saw a fairy with long reddish hair and very pointy ears peering down at her. The fairy looked about nine years old—Daisy's age.

"Are you okay?" the fairy asked.

Daisy nodded. How embarrassing. This wasn't at all how she'd imagined her arrival! If her older sister, Iris, were here, she'd be rolling her eyes. Iris did everything perfectly and was perfect in every way. This kind of accident would never happen to *her*. Fortunately, Iris went to a different school.

Dripping wet, Daisy climbed out of the stream. She squeezed the water from her hair



and did her best to wring out her favorite yellow top. It was embroidered with little daisies, and she'd worn it special for the first day of school. Now it was a mess!

The fairy with the red hair and pointy ears picked up Daisy's bundle and flew toward her. She landed just as Daisy shook her wings dry, spraying the fairy.

"Thanks a lot," she said, handing Daisy her bundle. "Do you give towels with your showers?"

Daisy blushed. "Sorry."

The fairy grinned. She was wearing a sleeveless green dress with touches of white lace and a scalloped hem, and pointed green dance slippers with poppies on the toes. "Don't mind me," she said. "I was only joking."

Daisy pushed her straggly wet hair away from her face. She must look a sight! When her hair was dry, it flipped up at the ends and was a pretty blond color. Wet, it looked like an old dishrag. "Are you a junior fairy helper too?" she asked.

"Sure am." The fairy fluttered her wings. Daisy was surprised to see that they were much smaller than most flower fairies' wings.

"I'm Poppy," said the fairy. "What's your name?"

"Daisy," she said, pulling off her soggy dance slippers and tucking them into her bundle.

"I've already been to the cottage," Poppy said, "but you're the only other junior fairy I've met so far."

"Have you seen Mistress Lily?" Daisy asked eagerly.

"Not yet," said Poppy. "We'll see her when we get to class."

"Where do we sleep?" Daisy asked.

Poppy linked her arm through Daisy's. "Outside. Come on, I'll show you. We've got a few minutes before class starts."

As they came up to the cottage, they heard beautiful music. Someone was playing a harp. The fresh smell of baking bread wafted from an open window. Daisy breathed in deeply. "I still can't believe I'm really here," she said.

"Me neither," said Poppy. "I've wanted to become a fairy helper for the longest time."



"Really?" cried Daisy. "Me too!"

Poppy smiled. Then she pointed to a welltended plot of flowers. Partly shaded by the oak tree, they grew beside the cottage. "See the poppies? That's where I'm camped out."

Daisy spotted a bunch of daisies right next to the poppies. How perfect was that? Her wings fluttered with delight. "Terrific! We can be neighbors!"

"I'd like that," said Poppy.

Her reply made Daisy feel warm all over in spite of her damp clothes. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they became good friends? Iris had friends by the dozens, of course. But here, in this new place, Daisy would be happy with just *one*.



## Violet and Marigold

umming cheerfully, Daisy untied her bundle and unpacked her few belongings: a tiny silver cup, a pillow stuffed with dandelion fluff, and a gold-backed mirror shaped like a daisy.

Her new friend was sitting cross-legged on top of a poppy. The flower was almost the same color as her hair. "Ready to go to class?"



she asked when Daisy had finished arranging her things on top of her flower bed.

"You bet!" said Daisy. She grabbed hold of her flower's stem and slid to the ground another thing Iris wouldn't do. She'd say it was too "unfairylike."

Poppy laughed and slid down her flower's stem too.

They walked toward the cottage. The tip of the roof was less than two feet high almost the same height as the flowers growing alongside the building. Before they had gone very far, Daisy tripped over a pebble and landed on the ground.

"Get off me!" a muffled voice cried.

Poppy whirled around. "Who said that?"

Just then, Daisy felt a light push on her back. Startled, she scrambled to her tiny feet. In a swirl of golden glitter, a fairy appeared. Wispy thin, with large brown eyes, she was dressed in an old-fashioned velvet gown. It was dark purple with a lace collar and cuffs. A matching velvet bow held back the long brown hair that trailed down her back.

"S-sorry," she stuttered. "I didn't mean to startle you. I sat down to rest a moment, and you fell right on top of me." She smiled shyly. "I'm Violet, by the way."

Daisy smiled back. "I'm Daisy, and this



is my friend Poppy."

Poppy had been staring at Violet ever since she appeared. "You can make yourself invisible?" she blurted out.

Invisibility was a difficult skill to master. Most flower fairies learned how in school.

Violet blushed. "My grandmother taught me."

"I wish I could make myself invisible," said Poppy. "All I can do is shape-shift."

Daisy's mouth dropped open. "You can shape-shift?"

"Sure," said Poppy. "I'm half pixie, after all. Pixies are good at shape-shifting."

Poppy was half pixie? No wonder her ears and her wings looked a little different, thought Daisy. And green was a pixie's favorite color.

Then another voice called out. "Yoo-hoo!"

Daisy looked around but didn't see

anyone. Was it another invisible fairy? "Where are you?" she asked.

"Look up!" said the voice.

Daisy tilted her head back. Perched on the cottage's clover-covered roof was a short, plump fairy with a round face. On top of her curly golden head sat a wreath of tiny white flowers that trailed yellow ribbons. Her blossom-shaped skirt was yellow too.

"Hi there!" she said, peering down. "I'm Marigold."

"Nice to meet you," said Daisy.

"Won't you join us?" Poppy asked. "We're on our way to class."

"I'd love to!" Marigold fluttered down from the roof.

Daisy couldn't help staring at her wings. They were covered with bright yellow polka dots. "I love your wings," Daisy said. Marigold smiled. "Thanks. I change them to match my outfits." Daisy wished she could do that.

As the other fairies chatted, Daisy glanced longingly toward the door. It was decorated with a cheerful painted border of colorful flowers. She wondered what the inside of the cottage would be like.

Marigold turned toward Violet. "Did I hear you say you can become invisible?"

Violet nodded.

"Wow," Marigold said. "Maybe you'll volunteer in class to show us how it's done."

"Oh, no," said Violet. "I couldn't." Her delicate wings faded until they became almost transparent. "I don't like being watched."

"Then I guess it's lucky you can become invisible," Poppy joked.

Everyone laughed, including Violet.

"We'd better hurry," said Daisy. "It would be awful to be late to class on our very first day!"

Fluttering their wings, the fairies flew to the cottage. Inside, it was larger than it seemed from the outside, with a second-floor balcony that overlooked the dining and sitting-room areas on the main floor.

"We have class on the balcony," said Poppy.



"Mistress Lily's office is up there too."

As the four fairies fluttered up to the balcony, Daisy was careful to look where she was going. She didn't want any more accidents. She was thrilled to be here. But she was also a little worried. Poppy could shapeshift. Violet could turn invisible. Marigold could change her wings to match her clothes. What if Daisy was the only junior fairy *without* a special talent?



The First Class

aisy sat down next to Poppy at desks facing the front of the room. A garland of pink roses, purple lilacs, and white gardenias hung from the balcony railing. Each blossom was almost as big as the junior fairies. "Mmm," said Daisy. She loved the smell of fresh flowers. Glancing up, she admired the pretty blossom-shaped lights that hung from the rafters. An office door opened at the back of the room and a slender fairy with long golden hair flew out. "Welcome to Cloverleaf Cottage," she said as she landed next to the railing. "I'm Mistress Lily."

Daisy knew it was rude, but she couldn't help staring. Mistress Lily was the most beautiful fairy she'd ever seen. She was wearing a deep-blue satin gown with a round neck and a flowing skirt. The color of the gown matched her eyes perfectly. So did the sapphires in the silver necklace she wore, and in the bracelets that circled her graceful wrists. Why, she was even prettier than Iris!

Mistress Lily smiled at everyone. "I'm happy you're here," she said. "We're going to have a good time together. I look forward to getting to know all of you." Then she asked for the fairies' names and birth dates. There were eight junior fairies all together and they



were all nine years old. But Rose, whose graceful pink wings shimmered under the blossom-shaped lights, was the oldest by a couple of months.

The youngest of the junior fairies were three sisters—*triplets*—named Heather, Hyacinth, and Holly. Identically dressed in sparkly silver dresses, their wings stuck out through slits in their lavender capes. All three wore their fair hair braided, then pinned across the tops of their heads. Tucked into their braids were sprigs of little white flowers called baby's breath.

"You're all here because you want to help humans, right?" the teacher asked.

Daisy nodded eagerly. So did the other junior fairies.

"I thought so," said Mistress Lily. Her eyes twinkled. "I like helping humans too. Are you looking forward to granting wishes?" Everyone nodded again.

"Excellent," said Mistress Lily. "But before we practice wish granting, there are some other skills you must learn—like how to approach humans without startling them."

Poppy grinned with mischief. "What's the fun in that?" she asked.

Mistress Lily laughed a tinkly laugh. It made Daisy think of silver bells. "I'm sure some humans deserve to be startled," the teacher said. "But you'll find it's much more fun to help them. And one good way to approach a human is to disguise yourself as an old man or old woman. First make a request for something—food or water, perhaps—or pretend to be lost and ask for directions." She paused. "Would anyone like to volunteer?"

Everyone raised her hand—except Violet. Her wings turned transparent and she stared at her desk like she wished she were invisible.

Mistress Lily called on Rose.

"Petal rot," Poppy muttered as she lowered her hand.

As Rose glided to the front of the room, Daisy admired the silver tiara that sat on top of her head and the ruby necklace that circled her throat. Rose's jet-black hair hung in ringlets. She was dressed in a beautiful pink silk gown with soft, puffy sleeves and a full skirt. She even wore shiny pink heels that matched her dress.

"She's elegant," Daisy whispered to Poppy.

Poppy shrugged. "She dresses well anyway."

"We'll learn disguises later," said Mistress Lily. "For now, Rose, I'd like you to just *pretend* to be an old woman."

Rose hobbled up to Mistress Lily. "Excuse me, dear," she croaked. "Could you spare a



crust of bread for a hungry old woman?" It was a convincing act, in spite of the pink gown and heels.

"Of course I can," said Mistress Lily. "And

I'll even pour you a cup of fresh peach cider."

All of the junior fairies applauded.

"Excellent job," said Mistress Lily. Then she described two more ways to approach humans: by giving a compliment or asking for advice.

"Now let's practice in pairs," Mistress Lily said.

"Partners?" Poppy asked Daisy.

"Sure!" she replied. "I'll play the human."

"Okay," Poppy agreed. "Pretend I'm an old man." She strutted up to Daisy. "I just love your shoes," she said in a gruff voice. "May I try them on?"

Rose, who was practicing with Marigold, overheard. She laughed. "I wouldn't let a stranger try on *my* shoes," she said. "Besides, I doubt an old man would *want* to try on shoes that looked like Daisy's." Poppy's pointy ears turned red. "Who asked for *her* opinion?" she muttered to Daisy.

Daisy shrugged. "I'm sure she only meant to be helpful."

At the end of class, Mistress Lily said, "Tomorrow morning we'll be going on a field trip. Then you can observe an actual meeting with a human."

Hyacinth raised her hand. "Excuse me," she said. "Would that be a grown-up human, or a child?"

"A grown-up human," Mistress Lily replied. "But you'll be helping children later."

"Babies, too?" asked Heather.

Mistress Lily sighed. "Yes, but later."

"But . . . ," Hyacinth started to say.

"Yes?" Mistress Lily raised an eyebrow.

"Oh, never mind."

"All right, then," said Mistress Lily. "We won't have afternoon classes today. I'm letting you go early so that you can continue to settle in. I'll meet you after breakfast tomorrow in front of the cottage. Then we'll begin our field trip. Class is dismissed."

Daisy heard the triplets muttering together as everyone left. They sounded very disappointed. But Daisy couldn't help feeling excited. Though she'd heard lots of stories about humans, she'd never actually met any in real life. Tomorrow she'd get to see her very first ones!



et's go outside," Poppy said as the fairies flew down from the balcony. "All right," said Daisy. She looked around as they fluttered across the main floor. A chandelier with dangling crystals in the shape of pinecones hung above a long table on one side of the room. A white lace tablecloth, as delicate as a spider's web, covered the table. Already it had been set for lunch with gleaming silver forks and acorn-cap dishes.

On the other side of the room were thistledown cushions, a cheery woodstove, and a half-dozen thimble vases filled with flowers. A fine place to sit and study, thought Daisy.

Once outside, the two fairies settled onto the lawn, which sloped gently down to the stream. Colorful butterflies as big as the fairies darted over and under the bridge. They looked like they were playing hide-and-seek! A male fairy floated by in a walnut-shell boat with a maple-leaf sail. He smiled and waved, and Daisy and Poppy waved back.

"I can't wait to meet a human," said Daisy when the fairy had sailed on past.

"You mean you've never met one?" Poppy looked surprised.

Daisy's face grew warm. "My family doesn't



live near any humans." She didn't add that she felt nervous about visiting a *real* human town. In the stories she'd heard, humans lived in fear of monsters that wanted to harm them.

"I've met lots of humans," said Poppy. "They often wandered into the forest near my home. My brothers and I would hop on our fairy ponies and lead the humans in circles until they were lost." She grinned. "It was great fun."

"Wasn't it dangerous?" asked Daisy. "What if you'd been caught?"

"I almost did get caught a few times," Poppy admitted. "But if someone got too close, I would just change myself into a mushroom."

"Cool," said Daisy.

Just then the triplets flew by, their capes streaming behind them. Violet was right on their heels.

"I wonder where they're off to in such a hurry?" asked Daisy.

Poppy shrugged. "Who knows? Those sisters are sure crazy about babies though. I heard them say that they want to be birth fairies. They want to give blessings to new babies. They said they already know how to do it, but they need more chances to practice."

Did everyone know more magic than she did? Daisy wished again that she had a special talent.

Just then a horse whinnied nearby. Poppy's face lit up. "Do you suppose there's a stable?"

"Let's take a look!" cried Daisy. She grabbed Poppy's hand. Together they flew toward the whinnying sounds, which seemed to be coming from behind the cottage. There, near the forest, they found a small stable. Its roof was covered with clover, just like the cottage. Inside were three winged fairy ponies. Flowers and ribbons wove through their manes, and shiny satin blankets covered their backs.

As Daisy and Poppy began to pet them, a servant came into the stable. He was a type of fairy called a brownie. Though taller than the flower fairies, he looked about the same age. Freckles covered his face and his reddish brown hair stuck up everywhere—like he'd been in too much of a hurry to comb it.

"Are you new junior fairies?" he asked.

Daisy nodded. Then she introduced herself and Poppy. "What's your name?" she asked the brownie.

"Bink," he said. Poppy was patting the nose of a light-green pony. "You're petting Jade," Bink told her. "Opal is the speckled pony, and the pink one is Ruby."

"Could we ride them?" Poppy asked. "I *love* ponies."

"They're only kept here for class trips," said Bink. "You would need Mistress Lily's permission first."

"Oh." Poppy sounded disappointed. But before anyone could say another word, screams



split the air. The ponies jerked their heads up. As the fairies ran outside to see what was going on, Marigold burst from the forest. She flew toward the fairies, her wings fluttering faster than a hummingbird's.



## Marigold's Story

arigold landed in a heap on the ground. Her face was pale. The wreath on top of her head had slipped, and yellow ribbons dangled in front of her nose. With a trembling finger, she pointed into the forest. "There's a . . . a *monster* back there!"

"Where?" asked Poppy. "In the forest?"

"Yes," said Marigold. "He was following me."

"Are you certain?" asked Bink. "I don't hear anything."

Marigold looked confused. Then she said, "He must've returned to the human town."

Daisy's heart began to race. Marigold saw



a monster in a *human* town? Maybe those stories she had heard were true! Daisy sat down next to Marigold. "Can you tell us what happened?"

Marigold swallowed hard. "After class I wandered into the forest. After a while I came upon a human town."

Poppy nodded. "Blessings," she said.

"Thank you," said Marigold, reaching up to straighten her wreath. "I could use some right now."

Poppy shook her head. "I meant that the name of the *town* is Blessings. I've been there before."

"Oh," said Marigold. Then she shuddered. "When I was in town, I heard someone crying. It sounded like a young woman. I thought maybe I could help her." She paused. "Was that a silly idea? I mean, I know I'm only a junior fairy, but . . ." "Of course it wasn't a silly idea," said Daisy. Iris would've said it was, though. She was always saying Daisy was too young to do this or that.

"What happened next?" Poppy asked.

Marigold took a deep breath. "The crying was coming from inside a house. I flew up to an open window. I was about to peek in when . . . when something *roared* at me."

"Roared at you?" Poppy repeated.

"That's right. And then it growled, 'Keep away from here!"

"And that's when you screamed and ran away?" asked Daisy.

"Yes," said Marigold. "I was afraid the monster would jump out of the window and chase me!"

"Maybe the monster was keeping the young woman prisoner," said Poppy.

"I don't know," said Marigold. "I was too

scared to stay and find out."

Daisy couldn't blame her. She wasn't sure she would have stuck around either.

"So you got a good look at the monster, right?" Bink asked Marigold.

She shivered. "No, thank goodness. And I never ever want to!"

Daisy put her arm around Marigold's shoulders. "It's okay," she said soothingly. "You're safe now."

"And it's time for your lunch," said Bink. "Cook will have my hide if I don't get to the kitchen to serve it!"

Before they all entered the cottage, Marigold made everyone promise that they wouldn't tell what had happened. "I don't want the others to know," she said, hanging her head. "They'll think I'm a coward."

"No, they won't," Daisy said.

"Of course they won't," Poppy agreed.

"Yes," said Bink. "Most of them would have been even more scared than you!"

But Marigold wouldn't change her mind.

Rose was already seated at the table, reading a book. She set it aside as Marigold slumped down beside her on a satin-covered toadstool. Daisy and Poppy sat too. "Have you seen Violet and the triplets?" Daisy asked.

Rose shook her head. "Not since class."

While they waited for the others to arrive, the fairies chatted. Well, Daisy, Poppy, and Rose did anyway. Marigold toyed with her napkin in her lap and said little.

"Are you all right?" Rose asked her after a while. "You seemed more cheerful this morning."

Before Marigold could answer, Violet and the triplets arrived and Bink came from the kitchen. He carried a large tray of tea and fancy cakes.



Marigold perked up immediately when she saw the food. She clapped her tiny hands together. "Oh, goody. Honey cakes! I *love* honey cakes," she exclaimed. "And look, there are poppy-seed cakes too!" She helped herself to two of each. Daisy smiled. It seemed that the monster hadn't scared away Marigold's appetite. And she'd get over her fright quickly enough. But one thing worried Daisy. What if the monster really *was* keeping some poor woman prisoner? Shouldn't the fairies do something about it? After all, helping humans was what they were here for!



Field Trip

fter lunch the fairies had two more classes with a half-hour break in between. Daisy would have liked to discuss the monster with Mistress Lily. During the break, she suggested that to Marigold, but Marigold shuddered and shook her head no. "I just want to forget about it."

But Daisy didn't think the monster was

something that should be forgotten. "Why don't *we* fly to Blessings?" she suggested to Poppy after dinner. "We could try to find out what's going on."

Poppy shrugged. "Maybe Marigold just *imagined* the monster. Besides, it's getting late. We can talk about it tomorrow, okay?"

Daisy reluctantly agreed, yet she was puzzled. Did Poppy really think that the monster didn't exist? Or was she simply more scared than she wanted to admit? Daisy was scared too, but she knew that they had to do *something*. Of course, Iris would say they were too young. But maybe Iris was wrong.

Before long it was time for bed. Daisy and Poppy flew to their flowers. "Fringe and frippery, frocks and frills," Daisy chanted. There was a burst of glitter, and her tunic and leggings became daisy-patterned pajamas. After washing her face in a dewdrop, Daisy brushed her teeth and drank from her silver cup. At last, yawning, she curled up on top of her daisy and covered herself with a petal. She stared up into the branches of the huge old oak. Beyond it, stars twinkled in the sky, like sequins on a black velvet gown.



Inside the cottage, Mistress Lily was playing her harp. A waterfall of sweet notes flowed from the cottage windows. Daisy tried to stay awake to listen but fell asleep within moments of her head touching her pillow.

After breakfast the next morning, Daisy and Poppy joined the other fairies in front of the cottage. They were buzzing with excitement over the field trip and had all dressed with special care. Daisy was wearing a white and yellow striped dress instead of her usual yellow top and white skirt. Rose had added extra ruffles to her pink gown. And she'd French-braided her hair.

"Wow," Daisy whispered in Poppy's ear. "Rose looks like a grown-up—way older than nine."

Poppy grinned. "You're right. If I squint my eyes, she could almost pass for ten."

Soon Mistress Lily appeared. She was

wearing a strawberry-red velvet cloak over her blue gown. "Follow me," she said. Her cloak swirled around her as she led the fairies behind the cottage.

A large golden carriage, shaped like a giant acorn, was waiting next to the stable. Jewels glittered along the spokes of the wheels and on the trim around the windows and door.

Bink brought the three ponies from the stable and harnessed them to the carriage. The junior fairies seated themselves inside on satin-covered benches, while Mistress Lily climbed into the driver's seat. She waved her wand, and the ponies whisked the carriage into the sky.

"I wonder where we're going," said Daisy.

Poppy leaned out the window. "It looks like we're heading toward Blessings."

Marigold shuddered. "I don't want to go



back there," she whispered.

Daisy and Poppy exchanged glances, but they didn't say a word.

Finally, the carriage landed—right at the edge of Blessings. Mistress Lily paused to cast an invisibility spell. A sparkly golden veil floated down to cover the carriage and the ponies. Wisps of veil wrapped around each fairy, too. Though fairies often helped humans, they preferred to keep their own world secret. Fortunately, Mistress Lily's spell only made the fairies invisible to humans not to each other!

The junior fairies followed Mistress Lily up the main road. "Now where exactly did you see that monster?" Rose asked Marigold.

Daisy and Poppy looked at each other in surprise. "Rose knows?" said Poppy. "I thought you didn't want us to tell anyone, Marigold."

"I couldn't help it," Marigold protested. "It slipped out when we were getting ready for bed last night." Suddenly she stopped flying. Her body shook as she pointed to a yellow house. "It was there!"

"Really?" said Daisy. Compared to

Cloverleaf Cottage, the house was huge. Yet it was smaller than the houses around it and actually looked rather cheerful and cozy—not the kind of place where you'd expect to find a monster. "Should we look inside?" she asked.

"No way!" Marigold's face went pale. "I'm not going near that place again."

Up ahead, Mistress Lily had turned around. "Come along, please," she called to the four fairies. "Let's all stay together."

The fairies saw their first Blessings humans when they reached the middle of town. Daisy stared in awe at the wingless creatures. It was such a shock to see them up close. Why, the tiptop of Cloverleaf Cottage would only have come up to their thighs! The women's clothing—blouses and shirts with simple skirts or pants—was so



*uninteresting*. No wonder they often asked the fairies for gowns!

A young mother stood in the road, clutching her baby and wailing. "A human in distress is often a good candidate for help," said Mistress Lily. "Here are some tests you can use to decide if a human is worthy of help...."

As Mistress Lily spoke on and on, Daisy wished she would just stop talking and help the poor woman. The humans only stared at the young mother, then edged away as if she were crazy.

Finally Mistress Lily said, "Watch me, please." With a flick of her wand, she disguised herself as an old woman and grew to human size. She dressed in a rough cotton shift and wore thick brown shoes on her feet. Making herself visible to the humans, Mistress Lily hobbled over to the young mother.

Did all old people hobble? Daisy wondered. Surely most of them could walk just fine!

"Excuse me, dearie," Mistress Lily said. "I was wondering if you might spare a few coins for a hungry stranger."



The woman stopped wailing. "Of course," she said with a sniffle. Still clutching her baby, she reached into her skirt pocket. She pulled out some coins and dropped them into Mistress Lily's hand. "Thank you, dearie," said Mistress Lily. "And now, perhaps I can do something for you. For in truth, I am not an old woman, but a fairy in disguise."

The young mother stared at her. But instead of looking grateful, she looked angry! "Was it you, then?" she asked accusingly. "Did *you* do something to my baby?"



## The Yellow House

aisy gasped. Maybe the woman really *was* crazy. How could she think their teacher would do any harm?

"I wouldn't hurt your baby," Mistress Lily said kindly. "Maybe I can help you. What seems to be the problem?"

Pointing to her baby, the mother said,

"She keeps *changing*. One day she has brown eyes, and the next day they're blue. Yesterday, she had straight black hair, and today it's curly and red."

Mistress Lily shrugged. "Babies change as they grow. At least, that's what I've been told."

The mother frowned. "Not like this, they don't!"

Mistress Lily leaned over the baby. "She sure has a cute button nose."

"Yes," said the mother. "But yesterday it was as long as Pinocchio's!"

"Oh my," said Mistress Lily. Then she smiled. "I know what will cheer you up. I'll make you a new gown!"

"How will a new gown help?" said the mother. "I just want my baby to *look* like my baby." Did Mistress Lily really think a new dress would comfort the poor woman? wondered Daisy. She wasn't surprised when the young mother hurried away.

Mistress Lily shed her human disguise and returned to the class. "Well, that wasn't very successful," she admitted. "Not all such meetings are. Perhaps the poor dear isn't quite right in the head."

Daisy wasn't so sure. She glanced around at the other junior fairies. Hyacinth, Heather, and Holly had tears in their eyes. Anything wrong with babies really upset them. And Violet's wings had become completely transparent—a sure sign that she was feeling anxious.

"Come, girls," said Mistress Lily. "It's time to return to Cloverleaf Cottage."

"Excuse me!" Rose blurted out. "But

can't we try to help?"

"Not yet," Mistress Lily said. "You've barely begun your training." She paused and then added, "I'm sorry today's demonstration wasn't better."

Daisy and Poppy lagged behind the others on their way back to the carriage. As they neared the yellow house, the young mother they had met opened the door.

"Why, she must live there!" exclaimed Daisy. "She must be the same woman Marigold heard crying yesterday. You don't suppose the *monster* did something to her baby?"

"Could be," said Poppy.

"Hurry along!" Mistress Lily called to them.

Daisy and Poppy quickly flew to the carriage. As they left Blessings, Daisy glanced

down at the yellow house. "Don't worry," she said softly, wishing the woman inside could hear her. "My friends and I will be back soon. We'll find a way to help you!"





e need to do something about that monster in Blessings," Daisy said at dinner that night.

Violet overheard her. "M-monster?" she stuttered. "What monster?"

Hyacinth looked up from her plate. "Is something the matter?"

As Marigold repeated her story, Violet's large eyes grew even larger. Her hands jumped

nervously in her lap, and her wings turned transparent again. Heather, Hyacinth, and Holly seemed just as upset. They glanced at one another worriedly and bit their lips.

"Please excuse us," Violet said when Marigold had finished her tale. She and the triplets hopped up from their seats. Half running and half flying, they dashed away.

"I wonder if they think the monster will come after *them*," said Poppy.

"They certainly act like it," said Rose.

Daisy cleared her throat. "I think we should go back to Blessings and try to help that poor mother." Iris would have advised her to let someone older deal with the problem. But Iris wasn't here now, was she?

"I don't know," said Poppy. "What if Mistress Lily's right? Maybe the mother *is* crazy."

"Maybe," said Daisy. "But what if she's

*not*? What if Marigold's monster has done something terrible to that poor woman's baby?"

"You're right," Poppy said finally. "We should find out."

"So you'll come with me?" Daisy asked. She'd go by herself if she had to, but she'd prefer not to go alone.

"Sure," said Poppy.

"Marigold and I will come too," said Rose. "Won't we, Marigold?"

"I s-suppose," Marigold said nervously.

"When shall we go?" asked Rose. "Tomorrow?"

"But that's so soon!" squeaked Marigold.

"The sooner, the better," said Daisy, surprised at her own boldness. "I say we go *tonight*!"

"We could get there faster on the ponies," Poppy said. "Maybe just this once we could take them without permission. Bink might let us. Maybe he'll even go with us."

"And just where are you going?" asked Bink. No one had heard him arrive to clear the dishes.

The four fairies explained, and Bink agreed to help them as soon as he finished his chores.

About an hour later, Daisy and her friends soared toward Blessings on the ponies. The wind whistled in Daisy's ears as they sailed over the forest. It was dusk as the ponies landed in front of the yellow house.

"I'm scared," Marigold said. She gripped Rose's hand.

Daisy and Poppy held hands too.

Suddenly they all heard a loud roar. "Go away!" a voice growled. "Or I'll . . . I'll *eat* you!"

Marigold screamed. "It's the monster!"



Bink looked around. "Where?" *"Rraah!"* roared the voice.

Then, as if pushed from behind, Bink stumbled forward. He made a grab for something as he fell to the ground. "I'll get you!" he yelled.

"Let go!" the voice yelled back.

"Drat!" Bink cried. "The monster is slipping away!"

"Quick!" yelled Daisy. "We'll weave ribbons together to make a net!" The four fairies whipped out their wands. Little bursts of glitter fell to the ground as the wands shot colorful silk ribbons from their tips. "Over, under, up, and down," Daisy chanted. The individual ribbons snaked around one another to create a tightly woven net. Quickly, the fairies cast it into the air. It



floated down to the ground, covering Bink and the invisible monster. Within moments Bink rolled out from under the net. But caught in the center, the monster struggled to free itself. "Help! Let me out of here!" it cried.

"Show yourself?" ordered Daisy.

"Oh, all right." There was a burst of gold glitter, and the monster became visible.



The Most Beautiful Baby

*iolet?*" the fairies exclaimed in surprise.

"What are you doing here?" Daisy asked. She and Poppy untangled Violet's wings from the net. "And why were you pretending to be a monster?"

6

Violet hung her head. "I was supposed to stand guard. So no one would see."



"See what?" asked Poppy.

Violet glanced toward the yellow house. "Never mind."

"Something must be going on in there!" Rose exclaimed.

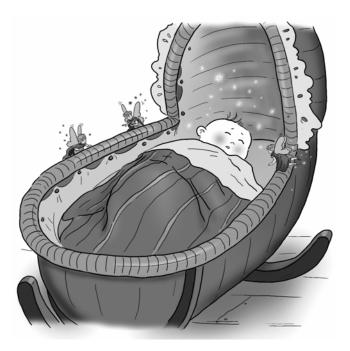
The fairies flew to the window and peered inside. The young mother was washing dishes at the sink. Behind her, the baby napped in a cradle, which seemed to be rocking itself. But then Daisy saw them: *the triplets!* 

Leaning over the cradle, Hyacinth waved her wand. *Poof!* The baby's red curls vanished in a puff of glitter. In the curls' place appeared a few strands of wispy blond hair.

Now Heather waved her wand.

As everyone watched, the baby's eyes grew closer together.

Finally, Holly waved her wand. The baby's head became rounder and her cheeks chubbier.



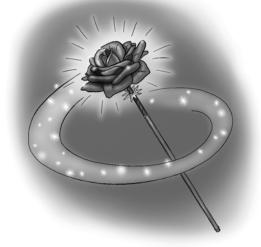
"So *they're* the ones who have been changing that poor mother's baby!" cried Marigold.

"Oh dear," said Daisy. The triplets had said they knew some magic. But who would've guessed they could do *this*?

"We've got to stop them!" cried Rose. "Wait!" yelled Violet. But it was too late. Rose waved her wand and the window rattled open. The noise startled the baby and she began to cry. As the mother rushed to comfort her child, the sisters dove under the cradle.

Daisy expected the mother to wail again when she saw how her baby had changed. But instead, the mother cried out with joy. "My baby! My perfectly beautiful little girl! You're back!"

She swept the baby out of the cradle and



covered her dear face with kisses. The baby stopped crying and smiled up at her mother.

As soon as the woman's back was turned, the triplets crept out from under the cradle. Then they zipped through the open window.

"What's this?" they cried in dismay when they saw everyone waiting outside.

"I tried to stop them," cried Violet.

Rose frowned. "You three have some explaining to do!"

"We didn't mean any harm," said Holly. "We just wanted to practice our blessings."

"We wanted her to be the most beautiful baby in the world," said Heather. "Only we couldn't agree on how she should look."

"We thought the mother would be pleased with our improvements," said Hyacinth. Her wings drooped. "But she wasn't."

"So you returned tonight to change the baby back to her *real* self?" Daisy asked gently. The triplets nodded. "Are you going to tell Mistress Lily?" they asked, looking worried.

Violet's lower lip began to tremble. "If you tell, she might send us home!"

"Mistress Lily's too nice to do that," said Daisy. "I won't tell, but you might want to."

Poppy shrugged. "Looks like everything's fine now. I don't see why Mistress Lily needs—"

"It's very late," Rose interrupted. "We really should head back."

"Yes," said Bink. "We can all fly back together on the ponies."

Daisy gulped at his mention of the ponies. Violet and the triplets weren't the *only* ones who had acted without permission!

Before they left, Violet gave Marigold a hug. "I'm sorry I pretended to be a monster," she said. "That's okay," said Marigold. "I forgive you."

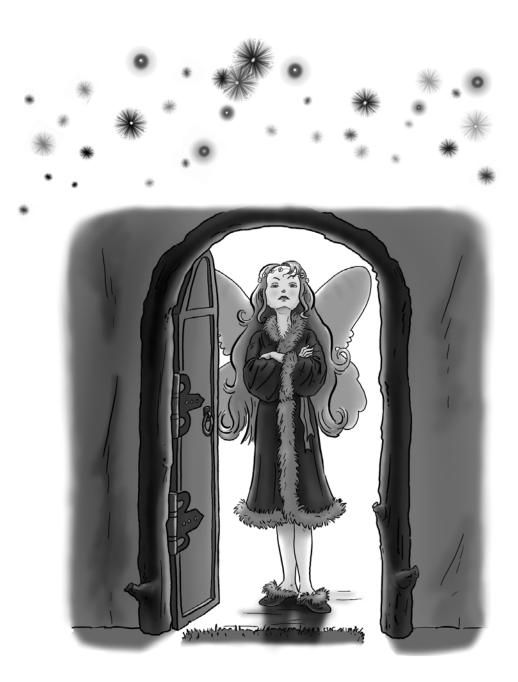
As they flew home, Poppy said to Daisy, "I've been thinking about that baby. Do you think her eyes were really that close together before? And her hair was so thin. She was almost bald!"

Daisy smiled. "I bet all babies are beautiful to their mothers—from the moment they're born."



tars twinkled in the sky as the fairies flew back. When they landed at the stable, Bink said good-bye. Then all eight fairies trooped up the path to Cloverleaf Cottage.

Mistress Lily was waiting for them just inside the door. Her arms were crossed over her fuzzy blue robe. She tapped the floor with one dandelion-fluff-slippered foot. "Where



have you been? I came downstairs an hour ago and none of you were here!"

"We're sorry," said Daisy. "We didn't mean to worry you."

Mistress Lily glanced from one fairy to another. "Isn't anyone going to tell me where you've been?" she asked.

The fairies all stared at the ground. None of them spoke.

At last, Hyacinth stepped forward. "It's *our* fault—my sisters' and mine, that is."

Holly nodded. "You can punish us, but please don't punish Violet. She had nothing to do with it."

"That's right," said Heather. "Violet only stood guard because we asked her to. She said it was a bad idea."

Mistress Lily frowned. "Perhaps you'd better start from the beginning."

The fairies collapsed onto the cushions

in the sitting area. After they had finished explaining about their trips to Blessings, Mistress Lily sighed. "I should be very angry with you," she said. "None of you are ready to practice magic on humans yet."

The sisters hung their heads.

"On the other hand," said Mistress Lily, "we all make mistakes. I should have listened to that young mother more carefully. I'm sure she was glad to have her baby back, looking the way she remembered." The teacher paused. "As for the ponies, they aren't for personal use—except with my permission. Bink knows that."

"It's not his fault," Poppy said quickly. "Taking the ponies was my idea."

"Mine too," said Daisy.

"And mine," said Rose.

Mistress Lily held up her hand for quiet. "No one needs to take the blame," she said. "But you must promise that this kind of thing won't happen again."

Everyone nodded solemnly.

"Good," said Mistress Lily. "I'm glad that's settled." She smiled. "And now it's time for bed. We've got lots to do in class tomorrow." She hugged each of the junior fairies in turn and said good night. Afterward, the girls flitted out the door to their flower beds.

Lanterns hung on the lower branches of the oak tree. They cast a soft glow over the fairies' sleeping area. Daisy listened to the trickle of the stream down below as she washed her face. Then she breathed in the sweet scent of flowers and clover and grass. Already Cloverleaf Cottage felt like home.

"Can you believe we've only been here for two days?" Poppy asked after she and Daisy had changed into their pajamas and settled



onto their flowers. "So much has happened since we arrived!"

Daisy fluffed up her pillow. "That's for sure. I don't think the triplets will experiment on any more babies, do you?"

Poppy grinned. "I doubt it. I'm glad we went back to Blessings tonight. Otherwise we might never have found out the truth about Marigold's monster."

"I just wanted to help that poor mother," said Daisy.

"Would you have gone anyway, even if no one else had agreed to come?" Poppy asked.

"Yes," said Daisy. "I think I would have."

"I thought so." Poppy looked at her with admiration. "You're very brave, you know?"

"Thanks." With some surprise, Daisy realized that Poppy was right. She *was* brave. Perhaps even braver than Iris. Maybe it didn't matter that she was occasionally klutzy and didn't know as much magic as the others. There were all kinds of special talents. Maybe being brave was *hers*.

Mistress Lily had begun to play her harp. A sweet, tinkling melody washed over Daisy like a warm bath. She leaned back against her pillow. "Good night, Poppy," she whispered.

"Good night," Poppy whispered back.

Daisy was glad she had found a best friend—and lots of other friends too. Life at Cloverleaf Cottage was turning out to be everything that she had dreamed it would be. Sighing happily, Daisy covered herself with a petal and soon fell fast asleep.



## **About the Author**

# Suzanne Williams,

a former children's librarian, is the author of the Princess Power and Third-Grade Friends series; THE MARVELOUS MIND OF MATTHEW MCGEE, AGE 8; and the picture books LIBRARY LIL and TEN NAUGHTY LITTLE MONKEYS. She lives in Renton, Washington. You can visit her online at www.suzanne-williams.com.

Visit www.AuthorTracker.com for exclusive information on your favorite HarperCollins author.

# Credits

Typography by Andrea Vandergrift

# Copyright

FAIRY BLOSSOMS #1: DAISY AND THE MAGIC LESSON. Text copyright © 2008 by Suzanne Williams. Illustrations copyright © 2008 by Fiona Sansom. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the nonexclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, down-loaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of HarperCollins e-books.

Adobe Acrobat eBook Reader January 2009 ISBN 978-0-06-183911-5

10987654321



### **About the Publisher**

#### Australia

HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) Pty. Ltd. 25 Ryde Road (PO Box 321) Pymble, NSW 2073, Australia http://www.harpercollinsebooks.com.au

#### Canada

HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. 55 Avenue Road, Suite 2900 Toronto, ON, M5R, 3L2, Canada http://www.harpercollinsebooks.ca

### New Zealand

HarperCollinsPublishers (New Zealand) Limited P.O. Box 1 Auckland, New Zealand http://www.harpercollins.co.nz

#### United Kingdom

HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. 77-85 Fulham Palace Road London, W6 8JB, UK http://www.harpercollinsebooks.co.uk

### United States HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 10 East 53rd Street New York, NY 10022

http://www.harpercollinsebooks.com