

THE SPROUT FAIRIES

Forever Fairies

Lulu Flutters

by Maddy Mara

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It was the first day of spring and magic was in the air. In a little glade within a vast forest, four flowers swayed in the breeze: a daffodil, a tulip, a poppy, and a lily. The flowers were waiting for the sun to rise. Slowly, the pink-and-gold dawn melted across the sky.

The first flower touched by the morning light was the daffodil. Its petals began to open, filling the air with a gentle scent. Curled inside was a tiny fairy. She had honey-brown hair with a bright blue streak in it, and long eyelashes. The fairy was wearing a little yellow dress. Her wings were folded neatly against her back.

The daffodil wobbled gently. “Wake up, Lulu,” the flower murmured. “It’s your Sprout Day!”

The little fairy opened one eye and then the other. She sat up and looked around. So *this* was the world! Lulu’s flower had been whispering stories and singing songs into her dreams as she

grew. Finally, Lulu could see it all for herself. See it *and* explore it!

Lulu fluttered her wings. It felt good to stretch them. She had been curled up inside her flower for a long time. Her wings were twitching to go.

The daffodil's sweet words filled the air. "Before you try out your wings, take a sip of flower nectar. You'll need the energy."

A drop of nectar glimmered on the petal like a pearl. Lulu reached up and caught it in her tiny hands. It tasted like sunshine. Energy raced through her. Now she was ready to fly!

Lulu had never flown before—after all, she had only

just sprouted. But with a couple of quick flaps, she zoomed into the air and hovered above her flower.

“Good work, Lulu!” the daffodil sang. “Go higher! I’ll catch you if you fall.”

Lulu rose until she could see all the flowers in the glade. Were there any other fairies about to sprout? She really, *really* hoped she wasn’t the only one sprouting today. Exploring with others would be much more fun!

The sun had just reached the tulip. As Lulu watched, its purple petals opened. Lulu could feel in her wings that something wonderful was about to happen.

A little face peered around a petal. This fairy

had velvety dark curls with purple streaks, and big brown eyes. She was wearing a cute little hat and a purple dress.

“Happy Sprout Day!” Lulu called, fluttering over to the tulip. “I’m Lulu. I just sprouted, too.”

The fairy smiled. “Happy Sprout Day to you!” she said. “I’m Nova. Is flying fun?” Just then, a gust of wind blew the fairy’s hat off her head and into the air.

In a flash, Lulu darted after the hat and caught it easily. She handed it back to Nova. “Flying is so much fun. And it’s useful for rescuing hats! Come and try it.”

First, Nova took a sip of nectar from her tulip.

Then she flapped her wings, rising up to hover beside Lulu.

“See that big poppy?” Lulu pointed. “I have a feeling there’s another fairy inside!”

Lulu and Nova watched closely. As soon as the sun touched the poppy, it unfurled. The red petals twinkled in the gentle light.

Sure enough, another fairy was sitting cross-legged at the poppy’s center. She was wearing bright red. Her hair, glossy black with gold streaks, fell across her shoulders.

“Happy Sprout Day!” Lulu and Nova sang together.

A smiled blossomed on the fairy's little face.
“Thanks! I'm Coco. Who are you?”

“This is Nova,” Lulu said, pointing at Nova.

“And that's Lulu,” Nova said, pointing at Lulu.

“Take a sip of flower nectar, then come join us!”

Coco drank thirstily. Then she shook out her wings and launched into the air. “Where's the fourth fairy?” Coco asked. “My flower said there were four of us sprouting today.”

Lulu looked around. At the edge of the glade was a huge lily plant. Upon it grew a single pale pink bud. “I think she's on her way!” Lulu said, excited.

The morning sun touched the lily. The flower

gave a little shake and the petals opened. The fairies watched with big eyes.

But no fairy appeared!

Lulu, Nova, and Coco looked at one another.

What was going on?

“Let’s go and see,” Lulu suggested.

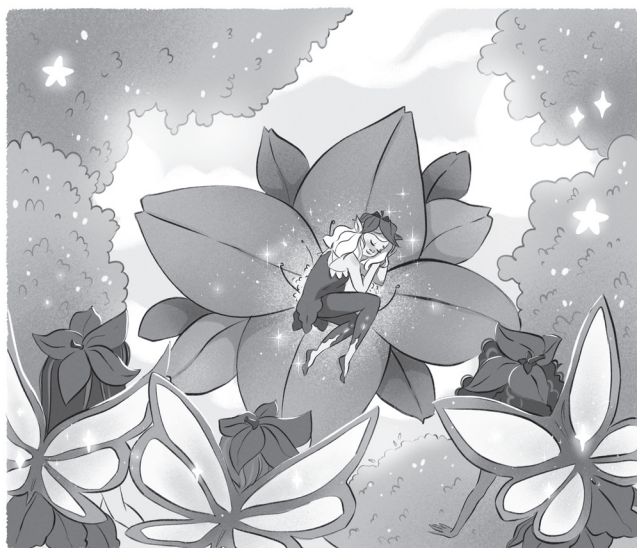
Lulu zipped over to the flower. Nova and Coco were not far behind. They peeped in. Lying inside the lily, fast asleep, was the fourth fairy. She had wavy pale hair streaked with pink, the same color as her dress. And this fairy was the tiniest of them all!

“What’s that sound?” Nova asked, looking around. “Is it a bee buzzing?”

Coco burst out laughing. “She’s snoring! How can such a big noise come from such a tiny thing?”

The lily gave a little shake. But the sleeping fairy kept on snoring.

Lulu, Nova, and Coco grinned at one another.



“HAPPY SPROUT DAY!” the three fairies sang at the top of their lungs.

The final fairy stretched and yawned. Her eyes blinked open. When she saw three faces looking down at her, she sat up. “Good morning! I’m Zali. You must be Lulu, Nova, and Coco. My flower’s sleeping song was all about you.”

Zali scooped up some nectar from her lily, drank deeply, and then spread her tiny wings and rose out of her flower to join the others. “It’s great to finally meet you! I wonder what happens now?”

The sound of fluttering made the four fairies look up. Another fairy was flying toward them—very, very quickly! She was bigger than

Lulu and the others, and had a long ponytail streaked with blue. Her sleek blue outfit had a stripe of yellow down one leg and an A embroidered on the front. The fairy did a neat loop in the air and came to a stop.

I'm going to learn how to fly like that, Lulu thought.

“Welcome to the Magic Forest, little Sprout Wings!” the fairy called.