

## **Rays From the Rose Cross Magazine**

### **When the Flowers Woke Up by Dagmar Frahme**

Mother put down the carrot she was grating and went to the back door. Marcie didn't cry often, but when she did, the whole neighborhood knew it.

"What's the matter with your sister?" asked Mother.

"Awww," said Doug, "she's crying because the flowers are dead. She wants them to bloom all winter."

Doug had just started first grade. He sometimes got disgusted with Marcie because she didn't know as much as he did.

"Did you explain that flowers rest in winter?" asked Mother.

"Awww," said Doug again, "I tried, but she wouldn't listen. Besides, she's crying so loud she can't hear me."

Mother sighed. "All right, dear, run along and play. I'll talk to her."

Mother led Marcie into the house, took off her coat, wiped her face, and took her onto her lap.

"Now, honey," she said, "tell me all about it."

"The flowers got all brown and funny and they don't look pretty any more," sobbed Marcie. "I don't like them that way."

"I know," said Mother. "It *is* sad to see the flowers wither in fall. But that happens every year."

"Every year?" sniffed Marcie. "Did it happen last year?"

"Yes, it did," said Mother, "and it will happen again next year."

"Why?" asked Marcie.

"Because the flowers have to rest from their work just as people do. You know how tired you sometimes are when it's time to go to bed?"

Marcie nodded solemnly.

"Well, the flowers feel the same way. All spring and summer they have been working hard, growing stems and leaves and blossoms and making seeds, and now they are so tired they just can't grow any more."

"Oh," said Marcie, looking as though she still didn't quite understand.

"Remember the night you made such a fuss about going to bed that we let you stay up as late as you wanted to?" asked Mother. "What happened?"

Marcie giggled. "I fell asleep on the floor."

"And why did you do a silly thing like that?" asked Mother, smiling.

"'Cause I was so tired I couldn't stay awake," said Marcie, still giggling.

"Right," said Mother. "And the same thing would happen to the flowers if they tried to stay up all year long without any rest. That is why God has arranged it so that after the flowers have grown up and let their pretty blossoms bloom and made their seeds, they have a chance to sleep under ground all win-ter long.

Then when spring comes they're ready to grow up as beautiful as they were the year before."

"But how do the flowers know when to wake up. Do they have an alarm clock?"

"No," said Mother, "they don't need an alarm clock. The Nature Spirits get them up and help them start growing again in spring."

"Are you sure the Nature Spirits won't forget?" Marcie looked worried.

"They won't forget," assured Mother. "Before we know it, spring will be here again, and all the flowers will be back in the garden. Just have a little patience, and you'll see."

So Marcie tried to get together as much patience as she could. It wasn't too hard, because so many exciting things had to happen before spring would come again.

Halloween arrived very soon. Doug was a goblin and Marcie was a witch, and Mother took them to a party at the Community Center. All the children in their costumes had a parade and games and good things to eat.

Then there was Parent's Day at Doug's school. Mother and Daddy were invited to visit Doug's room and see what was going on in first grade. Marcie went too, and had such a good time she said she couldn't wait to start kindergarten next fall.

Soon after that came Thanksgiving. Daddy took them to visit Aunt Maureen and Uncle Earl on their farm. Doug had been teaching Marcie to count, and she counted 16 people at the table for Thanksgiving dinner. Aunt Maureen said she was a very smart girl.

Then, very soon, Mother read the story of the baby Jesus who was born in Bethlehem. Even Doug, who had heard the story before, for once didn't say, "Oh, I know that already." They went to a concert of Christmas carols, and on Christmas morning Marcie found the dollhouse she had wanted so much.

Two days before Christmas it started to snow, and after that there was snow on the ground for weeks and weeks and weeks. Marcie played in it in the mornings, and after her nap waited impatiently for Doug to come home so they could play in it together.

One day Doug came home coughing and blowing his nose. "Everybody's got a cold at school," he said, and it wasn't long before Marcie had it too. But Mother fed

them plenty of orange juice and honey and vitamin C, and soon they were as good as new.

Daddy's birthday came in January. Marcie and Doug were allowed to stay up for some of the party. They laughed harder than anyone when Daddy came home and people jumped out from behind doors and furniture, yelling "Surprise!".

Marcie made her valentines when the time came, crayoning big red hearts on pieces of white paper. The hearts looked a little lopsided, but Mother said they were just fine, and Grandma wrote a letter addressed to Marcie and said she had never seen such a beautiful valentine in all her life.

But then the exciting things seemed to stop happening. The snow became dirty and gloppy. Daddy helped Marcie and Doug make a snowman, and that was fun, but the next day it looked very sad and droopy.

Some days Mother didn't let Marcie stay outside very long because the snow was so wet it soon soaked through her mittens and into her boots. Indoors she played with her doll-house, and drew pictures with her crayons, and built houses with Doug's blocks. She

helped Mother bake cookies and make beds and wash clothes and dust furniture.

But finally the day came when Marcie said something she hadn't said all winter. She said, "Mother, I don't have anything to do."

Mother smiled. "Well, I'll give you something to do. Something new and different. Go outside and look for spring. "

"Spring?" said Marcie. "But spring isn't here yet. And I don't know how to look for spring."

"You look for spring the way you look for anything else," advised Mother. "Open your eyes, and use them the best way you can, and pay attention to what you see."

Marcie wasn't sure what "pay attention" meant, but Mother was helping her into her snowsuit and didn't act as though she wanted to answer any more questions.

So Marcie went outside and looked for spring. She looked at the dirty snow, and up into the bare branches of trees, and all over the driveway. She looked in the garage, and stretching on her tip toes she tried to look into the mail box. She looked hard at the lump of snow that had once been the snowman, and at the puddles

on the sidewalk, but she couldn't find anything that looked like spring.

She was about to tell Mother that she couldn't find spring when Doug came home.

"Whatcha doin'?" he asked.

"Looking for spring," she answered.

"Huh?" he said.

"Mother told me to look for spring, but I can't find it."

Doug looked at Marcie as though he wasn't sure what to say next. Then his face lit up, his eyes sparkled, and he said, "Hey, I know. C'mon!"

He grabbed her hand and pulled her along after him.

"Where are you going?" she asked breathlessly .

"You'll see," he said.

In a minute, Doug stopped so suddenly that Marcie bumped into him. They were in front of Mrs. Blake's house. Mrs. Blake had the prettiest garden on the block. Mother said that was because she had no children who ran through her flower beds.



"What did you stop here for?" asked Marcie.

"Aren't you looking for spring?" said Doug.

"Yes."

"Then look."

Marcie looked. In Mrs. Blake's yard there were dirty snow, bare tree branches, and puddles, just as there were everywhere else. There was nothing that looked like spring.

Marcie was about to say so, when she saw something that made her draw in her breath and stare. Under the maple tree was a circle of flowers, their heads held proudly above the snow. There were fourteen flowers altogether, purple, yellow, and white.

"I found spring!" Marcie said excitedly. "I did find it! And the flowers did wake up!"

"Those are crocuses," said Doug, trying to sound important.

"Cro-cus-es," she repeated slowly. "I like cro-cus-es. I found cro-cus-es and I found spring. I have to tell Mother."

And Marcie raced home so fast that for the first time Doug had trouble keeping up with her.

After that, Marcie found a little more of spring almost every day. The snow melted, and green baby plants appeared in all the yards. The trees were covered with the beginnings of delicate little leaves.

Marcie didn't need boots or snow-suit any more, but Mother gave her a little umbrella of her very own and she had to use it almost every day. The more it rained, the greener the flowers, trees, and grass seemed to get. Soon yellow daffodils and pink and white hyacinths were blooming everywhere.

Then one day Mother said that Marcie and Doug had to get to bed on time because they were going to the Easter sunrise service next morning. Marcie wasn't sure what a "sunrise service" was, but she knew about Easter because Mother and Doug had told her.

It was still dark when they piled into the car, and a few stars were twinkling here and there. It was chilly, too, and Mother buttoned Marcie's new spring coat up to the very top.

They soon came to the top of a hill that looked down over their city. Many people were already there, sitting

in rows of folding chairs. There was a pink glow in the sky now, and they had no trouble finding their own places to sit.

Suddenly Marcie heard singing. Daddy explained that the choirs from many churches in the city had come together to sing on Easter morning.

As the choirs sang, the pink glow grew brighter, and suddenly the Sun appeared above the horizon. It warmed up, and in the bright light Marcie saw several Easter fillies in pots that someone had brought along.

"I'm glad the flowers woke up on time," she whispered to Mother. "Are they rested? "

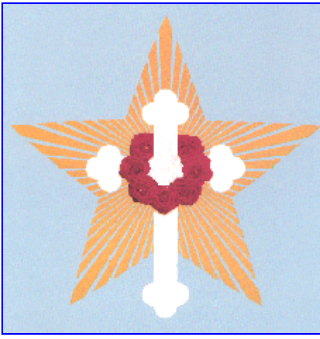
"Yes," said Mother, squeezing her hand, "they are rested. The whole world is rested and ready to start again with new life. That is what Easter is all about."

*—Rays from the Rose Cross Magazine, March, 1975, p. 139-142*

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