



How the flowers became

Anila Syed

Fable

5 min read

“It was two o’clock in the world.”

The child’s eyes were wide: “What time is it now, Gampy?”

The old man’s eyes sparkled through a curtain of white hair; his wrinkles deepened into a slow smile.

“It is November, child! Don’t interrupt me again.” He gazed out into the space outside the room.

“The world was so fresh and young, no-one and no-thing knew its purpose yet. The trees were stretching their arms up into the sky and pushing their roots down into the parliament of the ground. Sending each other counsel and greetings.

The birds did not know how to fly yet. Did not know that their useless, fingerless stumps were really wings which would give them freedom and dominance over the sky.

Animals sat side by side. The cat with the hare, the deer with the bear. Mice gazed up, unblinking at their neighbours, their beady, black eyes absorbing this wondrous scene. Mice, as you know, carry the knowledge of the universe in their heads, passing it down from generation to generation. That is why their eyes are completely black – they reflect the world they saw before that first dawn.

Man moved silently among the crowd. He looked at lion’s mane. He looked at giraffe’s tall, tall legs. He looked at the hands of the monkeys, who sat scratching their bottoms with their thick nails. And finally, he looked at the stark beauty of the tree branches against the sky.

Quietly, he sat down next to a sloth. But you could see his big brain was whirring, pondering, taking it all in.

What was he thinking?

In the afternoon the animals got to work. There were too many to talk to individually, so the creator gave them templates.

'You fish, you will swim in the sea and the rivers. You'll clean the sea for the earth.

'You birds will fly in the sky and clouds. You will keep the sky clean for the earth.

'You, worms and beetles and insects will rid the earth of the waste. You will clean the earth.

'You animals will live and run. You will churn the ground with your feet, you will cycle the air through your warm lungs. You will warm the earth and turn it with your feet so that all parts can turn to face the sky.

'There is none among you who will not work for the earth. The earth is your home and you are for the earth.'

The man's eyes narrowed. He breathed in some of the cold, new air and his hand rested on the tender soil, his fingers swirling the dirt with circles and the patterns he saw around him.

'I am an animal,' he thought to himself. 'I'm here to warm the earth with my breath and churn the ground with my feet.'

It was evening time of the first day.

The creator gathered all the mice – Did there seemed to be twice as many of them now? – and settled them into their nests.

The creator hushed the trees. So much chatter, all day long. Something would be done about that.

The creator met the man, curled up on the ground.

'You did well today, man. You ran and created warmth with your breath.'

The man's eyes sparkled through a curtain of thick, black hair. His face brightened into a slow smile which lit up the night.

Wherever the man's smile landed, as he looked around, brightness sprang from the ground.

In the morning, flowers covered the land. The world had become a garden.

The creator was content.

The animals rolled in the flowers, once they had taken their turns to churn the earth. Giraffe became covered in big brown spots. The frogs were squashed into the ground by their giant feet and tall, tall legs. To this day they are squashed, but very colourful. Even the birds swooped down and took the flowers high in the air, covering the sky in a bright arc.

Only the bees were not satisfied. Why should the man be the champion of the flowers?

Man had cut nearly all of them already and covered his home. He had made a beautiful headdress for himself.

The man was using up all the flowers!

The bees mumbled and hummed to each other. Their tiny brains were whirring and pondering. You know what they were thinking!

The bees broke off some branches from the trees and sharpened them! They surrounded the man. The other animals should have helped, but the mumbling, humming of the bees was frightening! It had turned into a venomous buzzing.

The creator heard the sound. All the contentment of the creator turned into such a terrible anger that had never been seen, and never would be again.

Today, on the second day of the earth, the bees were rumbling and fuming. The man was hiding. What was going to happen?

The anger of the creator became a ball of plasma which floated high into the sky. Only one other time, did the feelings of the creator form into a blue, ice ball in the sky, but that story is for another day.

When the creator looked at the bees with this anger, they shrank down and lost their legs. Their arms shriveled away.

'You will not be able to see the flowers again.' The creator said to the bees.

'You will not be able to run, your breath will not warm the earth. With no purpose, you will wither away.'

The shrunken bees waggled on the ground in confusion.

'No!'

It was the man.

'Your majesty, please! The flowers should be for everyone. Please don't punish them!'

The creator marveled at the compassion of the man.

'Alright. They will see flowers, but they will not see their full beauty. I will give them a different kind of sight.

They will not wither.'

The creator thought for a long, long time.

'I can not return the bees to how they were before, but I can have mercy. I will give them wings. But! Hear me!

If you act in violence again, oh bees, it will be your final act. For each time you try to sting, you will die.'

The bees had thought that this was the end. The man, whom they had tried to harm, had saved them.

Each bee went into a flower and brought out the tiniest drop of the sweetest juice you can imagine.

They brought it into the hands of the man. And from that day on, even though no bee remembers why they buzz, or even how they can fly, with their fat, hairy bodies and gossamer wings, they know they owe man honey. That is the story of how flowers became.”

The old man licked the last little bits of sweet, warm honey from his bowl.

“Come on now, bedtime is long past. There will be another story, for another day.”

Read more fairy tales on Fairytalez.com