



The Township Fairy



By Leanne Johnson



Dedication...

*To all who believe in fairies or
who want to believe in fairies.*

*'Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,
For I would ride with you upon the wind,
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
And dance upon the mountains like a flame.'*

William Butler Yeats

"The Land of Heart's Desire," 1894

'Fairies glitter my heart with giggles.'

Terri Guillemets

'We call them faeries. We don't believe in them. Our loss.'

Charles de Lint

*'Every time a child says, "I don't believe in fairies," there
is a fairy somewhere that falls down dead. '*

James Matthew Barrie, [Peter Pan]

The Township Fairy

I would like to introduce you to my friend.

Her name is Lily-May and she is probably just about the same age as you.

I only met Lily-May the other day, but she told me all about herself and about her fairy friend, Rosalie.



This is Lily-May's story, so I will let her tell it...

Hello my new friend.

My name is Lily-May. I am so glad you have come to listen to my story. It is also Rosalie's story, but as fairies don't speak in the human world, I will tell our story to you.

Let me first tell you a little bit about myself. I am about your age and have long hair that is a bit wild. I have a dog called Belle and I love taking her to our park for a walk. She is a Dalmatian and has black spots.



Actually, Belle pulls me along, so I suppose she takes me for a walk! I wonder if you have a dog?

Perhaps you prefer cats or rabbits or colourful parrots?

I also love swinging. Don't you? I try to swing as high as I can and see if my toes can touch the clouds in the sky. It feels as if I am flying.



Hi, I am Lily-May



Colour in Lily-May in whatever colours you like

What else do I love to do?

Oh, yes. I love to skip. Have you tried skipping? It is really hard in the beginning, but if you practise and practise, you get really good.

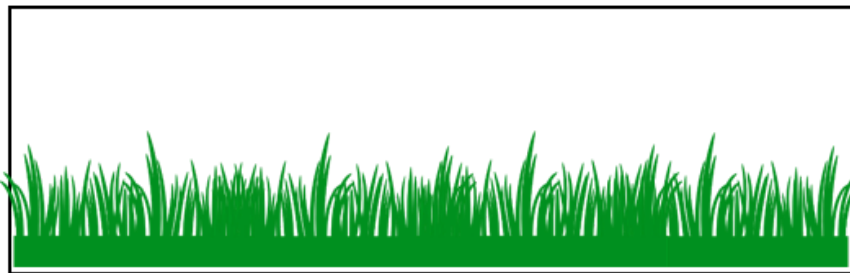
Sometimes your legs and arms get all confused and tied up in knots.

When my friends, Amber and Jade come to play, we see who can skip for the longest.



Jade usually wins. She is really good.

But most of all, I love my family. My dad and my mom and my baby brothers. They are twins and they cry a lot but I still love them. I live in a city in a pretty house with a garden full of flowers. I love planting seeds in the garden and watching them grow.



Draw some flowers you think might grow in my garden

This is a picture I painted of our house. I wonder if you can guess which is my bedroom?



I have lots of toys in my bedroom, but my favourite toy is a little ragdoll with wings; beautiful shiny wings that look like they have been spun by spiders.

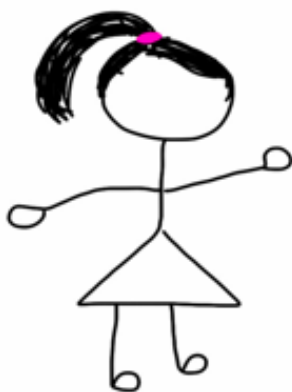
Normally ragdolls don't come with wings. She was given to me by my grandmother, Granny Rose. I loved Granny Rose. She always smelt like roses and lavender. So I named my ragdoll with wings, 'Rosalie,' after my granny.



The thing about Rosalie, (*which nobody else knows*), is that at night, when the sun has gone to sleep in our part of the world, and the moon shines in the dark sky, Rosalie becomes a fairy.

Of course this only happens after my eyes have closed, but Rosalie has the most wonderful adventures. In the mornings when I wake up, she is sitting in the toy box as if nothing had ever happened. But I know all about her adventures.

When I tell my mom about an adventure that Rosalie has had during the night, she just smiles and says that she thinks I must have been dreaming. But I know that Rosalie's night-time adventures are real. I think you know they are real too.



I know you can't wait to hear about some of Rosalie's adventures, but I first need to tell you about something that makes me sad. Something that takes away some of the happiness in my heart.

Draw a sad face on Lily-May

Everyday, on our way to school, we drive past a township. There are no pretty flowers in the township. There is no green grass. There are no big trees to climb. There are only houses that are grey and brown and patched together.

There is also a rubbish dump next to the grey and brown patched together houses. And there is a sad little boy who is playing next to the rubbish dump.



I look out the car window and wave to him and smile at him. He waves back. My heart feels so sad. He looks so lonely.

Now, back to my story and Rosalie's adventures.

There is one thing you must remember...

My thoughts and Rosalie's adventures are linked. Before I close my eyes at night, I have thoughts in my head. Somehow these thoughts fly to Rosalie and she makes them real in her adventures.



One night, as I was about to close my eyes to go to sleep, I was thinking about the sad little boy and that he had to play next to a rubbish dump.

I was thinking how nice it would be if some of the flower seeds we had just planted in our garden for spring could be planted on the rubbish dump and grow into beautiful flowers.

That would make the rubbish dump look like a little mountain of colourful flowers and it would also smell much nicer!



As my eyes closed, Rosalie's eyes opened and her spider web wings started shimmering and shining and twinkling. They sounded like soft musical bells. It was a beautiful sound.

I wish you could hear it.

The next thing, Rosalie flew through my open window and into the dark, moonlit night. She called all her little bird friends, about a hundred of them, and they came tweeting and chirping around her.

There were little swallows and dark blue starlings. It looked like a wing dance, with all their wings flapping about. Rosalie was the solo ballerina in the middle; just like in Swan Lake and the sky was her stage.



Rosalie whispered something in Fairy language to the birds, and the next thing they all started picking up flower seeds from the ground with their beaks and following Rosalie.

Can you guess where she was taking them? Yes, to the township!

They dropped their seeds on the rubbish dump and flew away. Rosalie sprinkled some silvery pink fairy dust into the air and flew back into my window and straight to her spot in the toy box.

The next morning I woke up and could see that it had been raining softly during the night. I was so glad, because that meant that the spring flower seeds I had planted in our garden would start growing. I went downstairs and told my mom about Rosalie's adventure and she smiled and said that sounded like a wonderful dream.

As we were driving to school, we drove past the township near my house and as I looked out the window, you won't believe what I saw!

Instead of seeing a stinky rubbish dump, there was a little mountain full of beautiful spring flowers. There were flowers of all the colours of the rainbow. Red, orange, yellow, green and purple. There were bluebells and sweet peas and daisies and marigolds.



And there was the little boy, playing in the flowers and he was no longer sad. I waved to him as we drove past and he waved back.

That is how I know that Rosalie's adventure was real and that I hadn't been dreaming.

The next night, as I was about to close my eyes to go sleep, I thought about the sad little boy's house. My house was so pretty, and his house was all brown and grey and patched together.

My mom and I had just painted pretty pink stripes on my bedroom wall and there was still some pink paint left in the paint can.



I was thinking how nice it would be if that little boy's house could be painted pink. It would make the township look like a happy place.



Colour pink stripes on Lily-May's bedroom wall

As my eyes closed, Rosalie's eyes opened and her spider web wings started shimmering and shining and twinkling. They sounded like soft musical bells. It was a beautiful sound.



The next thing, Rosalie flew through my open window and into the dark night.

She called her bee friends and they all came buzzing and humming around her. It was like a choir of humming. The bees matched the black of the night sky and the yellow of the moon. Rosalie knew that bees could carry much more than their own weight.



Rosalie whispered something in Fairy language to the bees and the next thing I could hear and feel and see a swarm of bees rushing into my room through the window. They lifted the paint can and carried it out the window.

Can you guess where they were taking my can of pink paint? Yes, to the township!

The bees carefully poured the pink paint over the grey house. Rosalie sprinkled some silvery pink fairy dust into the air and then all the bees started buzzing as fast as their wings could buzz, making a soft breeze which spread the pink paint all over the little boy's house.

The next morning I woke up expecting to still see bees buzzing over my bed. *I am glad none of them had stung me.*

The paint can was back in my room but there was hardly any paint left in it. Rosalie was back in her spot in the toy box.

I went downstairs and told my mom about Rosalie's adventure and she smiled and said that sounded like a really wonderful dream.

As we were driving to school, we drove past the township near my house and as I looked out the window, you won't believe what I saw!



Instead of seeing a grey and brown patched house, I saw a little pink house.

It was still patched together, but it looked so pretty and happy among all the other grey and brown patched together houses.

Don't you think it looks pretty and happy?

And there was the little boy with a smile on his face.

I waved at him and he waved back at me. He no longer looked sad. My heart had a happy glow.

That is how I know that Rosalie's adventure was real and that I hadn't been dreaming.

Well... that's the end of my story.

Rosalie now lives with another little girl. I hope she is still having adventures when the little girl closes her eyes to go to sleep.

I may never meet that little boy and you may never meet him. But if you drive past a township and see a little mountain of flowers and a patched together pink house, I hope you will remember that Rosalie's adventures were real.

I also hope you will remember to think about others who don't have as much as you do and try to find ways to help them.

Small acts of kindness can make a big difference and bring smiles and happiness into the lives of others.

Lots and lots of love from me,

Lily-May 

The Township Fairy

[A Story for 4-8 year olds]

This is Lily-May and Rosalie's story. Rosalie is Lily-May's ragdoll. She has wings and turns into a fairy at night and has some wonderful adventures while Rosalie is sleeping.

Won't you join Rosalie on some of her adventures and learn how to make a difference to those around you?

The Inspiration ...



Poverty surrounds us in South Africa. Wherever you drive, townships and shack dwellings are scattered between wealthy suburbs; a constant reminder of the discrepancy between rich and poor, privileged and underprivileged.

In daily passing these township homes, it struck me how some had been painted to look pretty.

That got me thinking of how to incorporate this in a story with a message of finding simple and creative ways to reach out of our comfort zones and be concerned for those less fortunate.

The result is **'The Township Fairy'** which you hold in your hands.

The author ...

I love stories. I love to read them and write them. Stories can take us places and introduce us to characters who become our friends and often teach us lessons about life.

I live in Montagu, a pretty Klein Karoo town in the Western Cape. **'The Township Fairy'** is my second children's story.

Look out for **'Mulberry Bee,'** my first children's story.

