

# *The Fountain of Us*

ASH G.

TEEN SHORT STORY WRITING CONTEST: FIRST PLACE – GRADE 7 TO 9

We live for the fountain. For as long as our people could remember the fountain has been supplying us with everything we needed, youth, crops, children, protection. As fairies we hid from humans, it started to get harder when humans started taking the forests, but as that happened the fountain kept us safe. Although the most magical part of it was it allowed our future selves to communicate with us. I was almost at the age where I stopped receiving messages and could start sending them, and I had yet to get one.

As I walked through the arch into The Garden of the Fountain, I looked around at the all too familiar sights. The lush green hedges, shamrock grass, a variety of coloured flowers poking up everywhere, with flat, granite stones leading to the fountain in the middle where the outside was crystal that changed hue every time I came. Today it had a slight marine tint. I sat down on the edge and swished my hand in the crystal clear water, waiting to see if a message showed up. When nothing happened, I got up and sighed. "I'm aging tomorrow. It would be nice to not be the only one who doesn't receive any messages. Even one would be nice future me."

"You know your future self can't hear you. You are just talking to a fountain." I turn slowly, knowing who that voice belongs to. A small fairie is leaning against the archway with their arms crossed smiling slightly at me.

"Thanks for that." I mumble as I try and push past them.

"Come on! Joke a bit. Maybe you never learn how to send messages." As they reach out to try and pull me into a hug I fly up and over the arch.

"I know how to already so that is not possible." As I touch down on the other side, I feel a tinge of guilt knowing that with their disfigured wings they couldn't follow me up.

"Sure, you do." They smile, walking further into the garden. I don't know if I hurt their feelings, I never do, but I know their wings had been a big part of their life and losing them was devastating. All fairies love flying but I have never met anyone who loves flying more than them.

~\*~

As I walked through the garden for the last time before I aged I hoped that I would get a message, any message. The fountain was a vibrant crimson that's contrast lit up the garden. I sat on the side of the pool and swished my hand through the water. Before I could pull my hand away the pool rippled for a moment and a message appeared, clear as day. 'cracks' I froze as emotions bubbled inside me. I got a message, finally. Then a realization hit. What do I mean cracks? I looked around confused, when my eyes fall on some small cracks in the side of the fountain. I stumble away as my breath quickens. I need to tell someone about this, an elder. My wings flutter and lift me in the air. They carry me swiftly over the forest floor, but as I exit the garden the forest changes around me, it's completely new. Trees, that weren't there before, paths, bushes and humans, there are humans. One points at me and says something incoherently. There is a sharp pain in my back, my wings falter for a moment and I drop quickly. I hit the ground hard and hear a crack, another arrow shoots through my wing and another in my arm. I scream as pain shoots through my entire body. My only thought is I have to get to the fountain. I hastily get to my feet and start running.

Arrows fly past me but I am quicker, blessed by the fountain that has broken. The arch appears in front of me and I soar through it going straight for the fountain. My wounds bloody the green lush around

me as I stumble towards the fountain. The sun reaches its highest point in the sky, and I realize I have aged, I can send a message. I fall down in front and swish my hand in the fountain to send the message 'cracks'. It disappears into the water and I send a second part 'stay in the garden, it's not safe' only to realize I sent it too late. My past self would be flying away. Another realization hits, I'm not healed, I'm still bleeding out on the brush. My blood seeps into the ground and moves over the fountain's ledge towards the cracks, it trickles through them clearing the ledge to make it smooth again. As I bleed out, knowing I'm not going to live, I have one final thought. We die for the fountain.