



Fairy Lake

The first time I saw Fairy Lake, I wasn't much older than you. My mother and father had just moved us to a new house in the middle of the countryside. It was the first time I'd seen anything outside of the city. The house itself was grand, but it was the gardens that surrounded it that captivated me.

Fairy Lake wasn't its proper name, of course. The adults were far too "sensible" and grown up to believe anything like faeries. I had always believed in the Fey folk - it seemed obvious to me that there must be an invisible world that crosses over with ours. My friends called me foolish. My teachers laughed when I dared to mention it. I was told to mind my own business and to get on with the war effort.

The war had finished by the time we moved to the new house. Hitler, and the bombs back in London, seemed a distant memory. The thing that struck me most about the gardens was the silence. I would wander down the garden path and disappear behind the hedgerows and towering ashes and be in another world. The woodland lay just beyond the hedges. It was more of a forest, I suppose. The trees went on forever.

I found Fairy Lake on my first day. I'd been wandering between the forked shadows of the trees for hours when I stumbled upon a clearing of sorts. It was surrounded on all sides by the white spokes of silver birches. It wasn't deep by any means. I could see lumps and bumps in the middle where the water level was too low to cover them. I think I could probably have walked all the way across to the middle without wetting any higher than my knees.

A soft yellow glow hovered just above the water. When I approached it, I saw that it was a small ball of light, like a firefly. I realised at once that it was a fairy. It was small, like an insect, but looked more like a grumpy old man. It was floating in the air with its legs crossed and its eyes closed. I approached it cautiously. One eye opened and it began to grin.

My heart leapt and I knew I had been tricked. This wasn't any old fairy, it was a bogan. Bogan are



particularly tricky fey who love to play pranks on unwitting humans. They hide things around the house and tie shoelaces together. This one was acting as a decoy. I turned to run away but tripped over the thin rope that had been tied around my ankles by another two impish sprites.

I sat up and crossed my arms in anger. My mouth opened ready to scold them, but another fairy popped out from behind a bush and sent them scurrying away.

“My name is Blossom Fey,” she said in a delicate voice. “I must apologise for my brothers.” She raced over and cut the rope around my ankles.

“I am Daphne,” I said. I knew that I still sounded angry, but I didn’t want to scare Blossom Fey away.

We talked until the sun began to set. Blossom Fey told me all about the fairies that lived around the lake. She also told me about the grave danger that was threatening the hidden world. Of course, I offered to help in any way I could, but that is a story for another time!

VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. Find a word that tells you that the new house was large.
2. Which word tells you that the author couldn’t stop thinking about the gardens?
3. Find a word that means “walk slowly and without a direction”.
4. What does the word “cautiously” tell you about how the author was feeling as they approached the fairy?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

R

What was the thing that the author noticed most about the gardens?

R

What is the author’s name?

I

Do you think the author was surprised to see a fairy? Why?

E

Why has the author used quotation marks around “sensible”?

P

What do you think the grave danger was that threatened the fairy world?

Answers:

1. Grand
2. Captivated
3. Wander
4. They were nervous and moving slowly
5. Tell them off

R: They were silent

R: Daphne

I: Accept reasoned answers that show understanding of the author always believing in them, so surprise would be minimal, but there would still be an element of shock.

E: The author doesn't believe that it is sensible to not believe in fairies - it is just something that adults say

P: Accept answers that show an understanding of the time period and fantasy world. Modern technology and climate change would not be appropriate - but human encroachment into their world would be, for instance.