

Painted Seasons

A cool, crisp breeze blows through the wooded forest of the north. Protected from the harsh breeze on the forest floor, grows hundreds of berry bushes. Red, yellow, and orange berries hang from their branches. A clan of Woodland Fairies are flying leaves full of fresh stream water over to the berry bushes. They gently pour the water around their bases. The Woodland Fairies resemble humans (about the size of a human hand) and have translucent wings like those of dragonflies. This particular clan has dark hair and tan skin. With silk from a spider's web, they sew together luscious green leaves to wrap around their bodies.

During the spring and summer, the clan grows and cares for these precious berry bushes. The monarch of the Woodland Fairies circles around the bushes, overseeing that each has enough to drink. Traveling over towards a bush, one of the littlest fairies, Fayette, starts shivering. The cool, crisp breeze has escaped and found its way down to the forest floor. Her little hands are not able to keep the leaf she carries steady. The water droplets splash as they hit the land and soak into the earth. Fayette dives through the air towards the ground. She stumbles a little as she lands, for none of the fairies can walk very well. Kneeling where the water fell, Fayette starts to cry. Hearing her cries in the distance, the monarch fairy flies with the speed of a hawk towards the little one. Reaching her, she gently puts a hand on Fayette's shoulder. The breeze catches the monarch and she shivers from head to toe. The monarch's eyes open wide and she tilts her head towards the sky, letting a high pitch song emerge from her throat. The clan immediately stops what they're doing. Listening to the monarch's song, the fairies start to gather around the bushes. Everyone is anxious, for the monarch's song means "It's time".

The monarch ends her song and all the fairies start plucking berries off the bushes. A few fairies struggle to fly with the berries, for some are quite heavy. Looking around, the clan is bustling about. Most of them are singing joyous songs. One by one the bushes lose their precious fruit. Three piles form around the base of a gigantic maple tree. This maple is the Woodland Fairy's Hallow. For generations, clans of Woodland Fairies have lived in this hallow. A few clan members stand by each one of the piles, making sure the berries are sorted by color. It takes the fairies most of the day to remove and sort all of the berries. The last berry is dropped onto the red pile and the hundreds of fairies celebrate with harmonious songs and dance. Such a happy occasion this is for them.

The monarch swirls through the air and starts singing a different song. The largest and strongest of the clan depart and fly into their Hallow to retrieve large stones. Emerging from the Hallow, they drop the stones on the three piles, crushing the berries into a paste. After pushing the stones out of the way, the clan divides into three groups and swarms each of the piles. All the fairies cover their little hands in the berry paste. Once covered, the Woodland Fairies take flight, flying all over the forest. Each fairy goes over to a leaf on one of the trees and with their hands, paints the leaf. Every fairy in the

clan paint leaves until all the trees in the forest gleam with magnificent colors. The forest turns into a sea of red, yellow, and orange, which can be seen for miles around. The monarch soars above the tree line, looking out into the distance. She is anxiously waiting for the Spirit of the North, for the bright colors signal the spirit to come.

The monarch notices something flying in the distance. Closer and closer it comes. She sings with happiness for the Spirit of the North has arrived. The whole clan appears above the canopy and watches in awe. Little Fayette, the last to appear, flies over to the monarch. The spirit has the head and arms of a human woman, but the rest of her body fades out into nothingness. She has long hair that blows in the wind and icy, blue skin. The Spirit of the North soars over all the trees. As she breathes, her icy, winter breath creates snow over everything, turning the once colorful land into a snowy fortress. Animals on the forest floor scurry into their dens to escape the oncoming cold.

The Spirit of the North flies over to Fayette and hands her the most beautiful snowflake anyone has ever seen. The snowflake is pure white and is made of intricate patterns. The intense cold from the snowflake freezes Fayette's fingers, but she is so intrigued by it that she didn't notice. Fayette lets out a short, high pitch sound, which pleases the spirit. The spirit, now finished covering the forest, leaves the fairies to continue her work. As the clan sees the Spirit of the North depart, they burst into song. Their song echoes throughout the whole forest. Feeling that it is time to leave, the monarch leads her clan back down from the canopy to their Hallow, where they will sleep until the blossoms of spring appear.