

The People of Pim

For Dad who remembers when fairies were evil,
and for me who tries to believe there is a reason behind it.

Once upon on a time there were a blessed and wise people from somewhere Far East who lived on and around a beautiful gigantic Cypress Tree known to them as the Great Yoshino, which means *respect*. They were a semi-nomadic people, living high up in the tree in summer where the weather was cooler and moving down the great tree in winter to tuck their homes and animals under the warm protection of the big boughs. They were never far from the tree though. Their animals grazed on moss that grew on the boughs, the children hopped and climbed from branch to branch, and they held all celebrations in and under the tree.

[Now look waaaay up!]

When one climbed higher up the whorled branches, as if climbing up a big spiraling medieval staircase, the boughs became a little more barren, were shorter, and tasty herbs and tiny alpine flowers were hidden in the sweet piney smelling needles high up. This was the beauty and draw of the Great Yoshino tree for them.

When anyone of them needed to clear their minds they would just climb high into the tree and simply sit and just be for a little while. The tree was their connection between the earth and the world beyond, the quietness up there gave them their strength and great wisdom.

Now this tribe was famous in the region for a rare breed of goat called the *Tamar*. The goats were rather tall and willowy like a deer but pure white. The people mixed the goats' cheese with herbs from the tree and drank the smooth and sweet milk fresh every day. It gave a rosy glow to their childrens' cheeks. These people were known as the People of Pim.

Even more than their cheeses they were known for their weavings, for the Tamar goat had an unequalled wool on its underbelly that had fibers that were long, soft and strong. It made for beautiful blankets, fabrics, and tapestries. Over the ages the People of Pim had learned which plants made the most beautiful and vivid dyes; the wool, being pure white, took the dye beautifully. The common lilac tree was one of the best for colours. The leaves gave an earthy yellow; the flowering tops a beautiful Wedgewood Blue and the roots, harvested in autumn, and with a shoomi coin as a mordant, most soothing red ochre.

The tapestries were made with age old stories woven into them and were only given outside the tribe occasionally when one was needed somewhere in the world. You see, the tapestries had a special power of unity. Specific warps and wefts were chosen depending on the circumstances of the community that called for the help of the People of Pim. Only through the interlacing of the warp and weft itself, and the completion of the piece, would healing happen, and one had just been called for...

...from the other side of the world on a far off island a vibration calling in the People of Pim had begun 12 years ago when a young couple and their small child were walking through the woods in early spring. They had come upon a small grove of Stewartia Trees whose bark was peeling in sadness because no humans came very often anymore to play among them in the woods. The trees needed the energy of laughing children to keep them strong. They watched the humans.

The tiny human boy was toddling over roots and sticks, discovering little leaves, bugs and berries when he found a lone anemone; A small white wood flower. He pointed to it and his mother said,

“Oh you have found a Mayflower, you must pick the first one you see to ward off illness!”

At this his father laughed and said,

“Don’t be so foolish, teaching him those silly old folktales!” and he picked the flower, “ That is a wood anemone, and those are not even petals, come and see, these six white pieces are called sepals and they protect the tiny flower inside. They close up at night and on foul days to protect the little flower.” He showed them the flower close up and it was very beautiful, however, when his father finished his explanation he tossed the flower down and continued on down the path chatting about different Latin names of plants. The little boys’ mother picked up the flower and waved it over her little boys’ head three times in a circular motion to protect him during the spring, and then she left the flower gently on a bed of moss as a gift for the fairies. She secretly determined that her child would not forget the world of wonder, the world we cannot see but can only believe in. She knew that without wonder, life’s magic would be gone.

The trees have a gentle sigh.

Meanwhile in behind the trees and bushes...

the fairies, sprites, elves, and other woodland creatures had seen all that had happened. They were angry that human man had dismissed their existence and this opened a hole in them that quickly filled up with mischievous thoughts. They worried for this was not the first time they had seen something like this happen. It was becoming more and more common. No longer did children run through the woods and play, indeed the woods rarely saw any children! No flower chains were woven, honeysuckle nectar sipped or bows and arrows constructed out of saplings. They could not remember the last time that a story about them was told at the edge of the meadow.

They had reason to worry- there was a great danger in the wonder and belief in fairies and plant-lore being forgotten. All the woodland folk were taught by the wise owls when they were children that there is kind of a thin curtain, a veil that exists between the fairy world and ours. There are holes in the veil, but these are good holes that allow certain fairies and humans to get

glimpses into each others' worlds and sometimes even visit for a time. The belief in fairies and the magic of plants is what holds the veil together. If the humans lose their wonder about the fairy and plant world the holes get bigger and bigger until they begin to dissolve the veil altogether, when this happens the magic of plants, fairies and their stories disappear forever!

To prevent the wood spirits from doing any harm, the head of the island forests, dear old Goldwine, decided quickly to call a meeting. The calmest spirit was called upon, little Ailee, a brownie, to make the call. She picked up the sacred Harp of Ages, made from the sacred Evergolden Tree and very gently began to strum a beckoning tune. All the forest creatures recognized the sound at once and quietly gathered at the Living Chair.

Sit around the Living Chair

with Elves, and Sprites and Fairies fair,

Listen to what happened next,

When humans make the creatures vexed.

When all were gathered at The Living Chair, Goldwine called order, and in her gentle voice no louder than the sound of a deer stepping through newly fallen snow, she said,

“For a long time now we have all felt our powers weakening, we are being forgotten and will soon disappear if something is not done. We have to act immediately. There is only one thing to do. We must call for the help of my people-*The People of Pim!* They have the most mystical powers of weaving and will know what to do to mend the veil.”

Picking up a small reed she began to play an enchanting hypnotizing melody, it filled the forest, caressed every leaf and branch, ruffled the birds' wings and spread out until

it had left the reed completely and headed for the Great Yoshino Tree.

The song descended on the People of Pim in the same essence it had left the forest, soft and sweet and forlorn. The minute it hit the skin of the People of Pim, it was met with a selfless response of preparation. They arranged to go immediately and meet with the woodland creatures from this small island far away. Like a gentle mist Adapa, their leader, and their Master Weavers appeared at the Living Chair.

The Pimians listened to Goldwine and the plight of these Island Woodland Creatures with great compassion. He consulted with his weavers and they decided upon the tapestry that would bring the wonder back

and restore the veil. Just as they were about to reveal the pattern a sound arose among the crowd of creatures, a sound like the sweet babble of a very young child, yet the sound had an unfamiliar accent to it, almost human-like. The creatures looked around and saw Puca, one of the more mischievous elves standing holding a baby, as the baby began to whimper he handed it to his sister, the baby's mother.

When he saw everyone looking at him Puca cried out in distress,

“Oh forgive me!! I was very angry when I saw the little humans' father sneer at our truth. I fear I did a foolish thing! I grabbed this little boy when his parents were not looking and replaced him with an elfin baby-

one of my sisters'; she has so many I thought she would not notice!"

At this his sister screamed,

"A changeling!"

And she dropped the baby into an ancient Yew tree.

No one made a sound, not a twitter or a flick. Goldwine gently approached Puca and placed her hand on his head to calm the little elf. She said,

"Indeed you have done a very foolish thing. Changelings are feared by the humans and they may hurt the elfin child if they suspect. Puca, did you use any magic?"

Puca replied,

“Well... I took a witch hazel twig, a forked one, and waved it over the elfin baby's head. While doing this I drew from the little power I now have and chanted this,

Elfin baby world of green,
now with humans you'll be seen,
Bring our lore into their souls,
tempt with fiddles, tempt with gold,
tempt with dance on moonlit nights,
into the forest- then out of sight!

“Oh Puca, Puca,” she answered. “We must now all think of a way to change the babies back!”

With that Adapa spoke up,

“We think we may have a way to help, however, right now we must go begin the construction of your loom as our time here runs short, but the answer will be brought to you by a tiny ship that rides on the Rainbow Spectrum of our departing mists. The sailors are of a northern Pimian region and are very shy; they will appear for only a moment so send your quickest fellow to grab the scroll with the red tie.”

As they vanished a tiny craft did appear on a beautiful Rainbows' Spectrum, under a small bush. Goldwine asked the quickest of the creatures, a pink sprite, to nip over and get the scroll. A small sailor handed the scroll over and Goldwine unrolled it. It said,

“We will warp the loom but it is up to you and the humans of the island who come across the loom to fill in the weft. The weft must be woven while remembering plant, and fairy-lore. The memories can be childhood memories remembered quietly in ones’ mind or memories that are passed along to one another as you weave together. Only natural materials can be used to fill the tapestry, nothing can be picked or taken from a living plant, and no creature, human or fairy, can be harmed in any way when gathering materials. The loom takes twelve years to complete. When completed the veil will be strong again, the fairy world will be revealed in the form of wonder and your powers will be back.

During the next twelve years Pucas’ nephew will be among the humans, and the human baby will be raised by Pucas’ sister. The elfin baby will learn the plant and fairy stories from his human mother, and in turn he will teach them to his friends. However he will also learn to love stories and tales of the human history. The human baby will learn the ways of the woodland creatures and the fairy and plant lore from your side. They will meet in the woods at the veil at midnight on a full moon, the veil will have the leaves of the foxglove around and under it, to help ease the exchange, placed there by Goldwine, for no one else should touch the plant. Then the children will shift into and through each other, never remembering that they once lived in a different world. Each will bring the ways of the other with them. This will be the final strand woven through the loom. Then the wonder will exist again.”

For the next twelve years both children grew up happy and contented with loving families. In the forest they often were just out of reach of each other playing in and among the trees, streams and plants learning and sharing the lore with their friends.

Follow the different lore they learned and you may find the loom! Maybe if you remember some lore yourself the Weeping Beech Tree, to your right, will stop her crying!

Lore 1-

A slice of mountain ash is kept about to guard against witches and thieves...

Lore 2-

The apple tree is the central tree of heaven in Iroquois mythology and, in a Wyondot mythology, an apple tree shades the lodge of the *Mighty Ruler*.

...Twist the stem of the apple while reciting the alphabet, the letter you are saying when the stem breaks will be the letter of the person you will marry.

Lore 3-

One of the first traditions told related to hollies goes back to the Druids of the British Isles. Because the European holly found there is an evergreen and therefore one of the few trees in the forest to bear green leaves all year, they believed the sun never deserted it! They revered the plant as sacred and decorated the inside of their simple homes with sprigs of holly so that woodland spirits would have a warm place to survive winter's cold. (*Nanci Bross-Fregonara, <http://www.wvdnr.gov/wildlife/magazine/archive/05Winter/holly.pdf>*)

Lore 4

-Never ever disrupt a fairy ring, go around them. They may be marks in the earth, mushrooms, or stones, very bad luck to disturb them.

Lore 5

Russian healers use oil made from magnolia flowers and young leaves for treating hair loss, and apply as antiseptic on wounds.

<http://www.magnoliatrees.co.uk/magnolia-facts-and-folklore-press/>

You have found the loom! The fairies need your help to finish the loom, remember what the Pimians said,

“The weft must be woven while remembering plant, fairy and folklore. The memories can be childhood memories remembered quietly in ones’ mind or memories that are passed along to one another as you weave together. Only natural materials can be used to fill the tapestry, nothing can be picked or taken from a living plant, and no creature, human or fairy, can be harmed in any way when gathering materials. The loom takes twelve years to complete. When completed the veil will be strong again the fairy world will be revealed in the form of wonder and your powers will be back.”

The fairies would like to collect fairy and plant-lore for their library, if you would like to contribute please write one or two down in the book and where you grew up!

Just about midnight of the twelfth year, on the expectation of a full moon, the loom was almost finished, and the foxglove had been laid. The two children needed to meet at the loom and pass through each other to complete the final strand. The fairies were not told how this would be? They became anxious when all of a sudden...

...a strange soft mist came down onto the whole island, and all the humans fell into a light dreamlike sleep. The two children, elfin and human left their beds. Their feet floated just above the ground and they were swept through the forest towards the loom. (The Pimians tapestry was working its magic).

The tapestry placed the children on either side of the veil. The fairies waited in their houses, peaking out the little windows, clutching each other nervously, wondering what would happen!

When the childrens' feet touched the ground, there was suddenly a burst of blue light that lit up the entire loom and you could just see the passing of the bodies. As they passed through each other a strand of hair from each of their heads was plucked out and woven into the last place on the loom by magic. The light spread through the whole forest and into the creatures themselves everything was in place once again. It was finished.

With the wonder restored the Royal Fairy Kingdom itself was revealed underneath a great Purple-Leaf European Beech Tree, and would remain revealed clearly for the rest of that one night!

The island woke up from the strange slumber and all felt as if they had had an odd dream about the forest and the world within it, like a memory from a long time ago. Some of the folks on the island went into the forest in a dreamy stupor to look for the fairy kingdom as the dream had seemed so real. Some found it, others didn't, but their belief was renewed and like a big soft summer wave reaching its fingers up through the sand the fairy stories and plant lore of childhood began to fill the whole island, and as they did the veil continued to become stronger and stronger.

As a hazy summer dawn
emerged the fairy world
began to fade, the witch
hazel bushes ceased their
cackle...

Beach Plum bushes bent their branches down and covered the tiny houses that now looked like rocks and stumps.

The creatures retreated behind bushes and under plants and down into the meadow grasses...

Wonder had come to the
little island again!

The humans knew all they had to do was glimpse over their shoulder and remember the mysteries of the woods, the little landmarks, paths and plants in every season. They once again imagined elfin eyes watching out as they gathered little children onto their laps and revealed the mysteries to them. They swore they heard fiddles playing on misty mornings, and they never ever disrupted a fairy ring. They never forgot that part of themselves, the veil remained strong on the island, and the People of Pim smiled.

