

# THE DISCONTENTED GUMAMELA FAIRY

By Ligaya Victorio Reyes



**A** TINY Gumamela fairy sat upon her green stalk and surveyed the world around her. She was a very young fairy, and the world of the garden looked new and grand and enchanting to her wondering eyes. She saw the leaves of the Ylang-ylang tree stretch far out into the blue, merging into the outlines of the sky with a faintly blurred harmony. She watched the green and yellow blossoms swaying gracefully in the breeze, breathing forth a fragrance that was deep and strange, with every motion of the wind. She wished, with a great, great wish, that she were way up among those blossoms. She wanted to be gone from this lowly flower of the Gumamela upon which she reclined and be cradled among the thick foliage of the Ylang-ylang. There perhaps she could look around, and see the tops of the tall buildings which were outlined in the distance. She would then put out her hand and reach for a star, for there the sky would be very close indeed.

The tiny Gumamela fairy heaved a small sigh. With reluctance, she removed her gaze from the Ylang-ylang boughs and let it wander around. It rested for a brief moment upon the little cucharitas that bordered the garden path. She had refused their invitation to come down and play. Then she looked at the Rosal tree, a beautiful combination of dark green and white—the white of star-like blossoms that opened so trustingly to the light.

"If I were within one of those flowers," the little Gumamela fairy thought, "how well the red of my

dress would blend with the background of white. And I will be so sweet and so lovely that people will adore me." And the little fairy (vain little creature!) stretched her neck haughtily and waved a tiny wand with condescension.

That done, she deserted the Rosal and let her gaze travel through the length and breadth of the garden, drinking in each lovely scene that the place revealed. She wove discontent after discontent—wishing now that she were a sampaguita, then wishing again that she were a rose, then forgetting all these wishes to wish again that she were a tall, regal, scintillating dahlia. After some moments, the little Gumamela fairy succeeded in making herself completely miserable, so she sank into the red depths of the Gumamela for a long cry. Little sobs rose and fell in her tiny bosom, and her tears fell like dew upon the thirsty heart of the flower.

She was so engrossed in her sorrow that she was startled by a group of children who had entered the garden. When she looked up, they were running around in glee, watched indulgently by a pretty girl of twelve, the oldest of them all. One little boy ran to the rose, and tried to pluck it. But the rose, as every one should know, is a very haughty and quarrelsome beauty, and she replied with a sting to anyone who would break her off the stalk. So the little boy removed a bleeding finger and put it tearfully into his mouth.

The Gumamela fairy shook her head in condolence. She saw a little girl reaching up to get a Rosal, but the voice of the oldest girl rang out sharply in warning. "No, Nenita, that is for sister's corsage when she goes to the ball tonight."

"Not even one little flower?" Nenita pleaded. "Not even one," the oldest girl said with importance. "Sister is going to a White Dance and she will need all those blossoms."

Nenita ran away disappointed and stood with another little girl who looked wistfully at the Ylang-ylang tree.

"I want some Ylang-ylang for my sampaguita string," she said hopelessly. "But they are so high above." With her arm around Nenita, she went about the garden in a forlorn way. The Gumamela fairy followed them with sympathetic eyes. She heard them warned off the Sampaguitas, "which were for the altar." They dared not go near the lilies nor the dahlias, because they knew that those were "Sister's favorites, and she would spank them if they ever tampered with the regal flowers. Besides, 'lilies and dahlias are not good to play with, anyway,'" as the boy expressed it, and they certainly could not play with the roses and the orchids.