

Xiao Ling
Ding Dang
Soul Fairy
Joke Series

The Magic Fairies

The Ring of the Succubae

Xiao Ling Ding Dang

Translated by David Lancashire

A rich and colorful fairy world
A tribe of enchanting fairies
A strange and rich adventure
A lifelong moral lesson

二十一世纪出版社
21st Century Publishing House

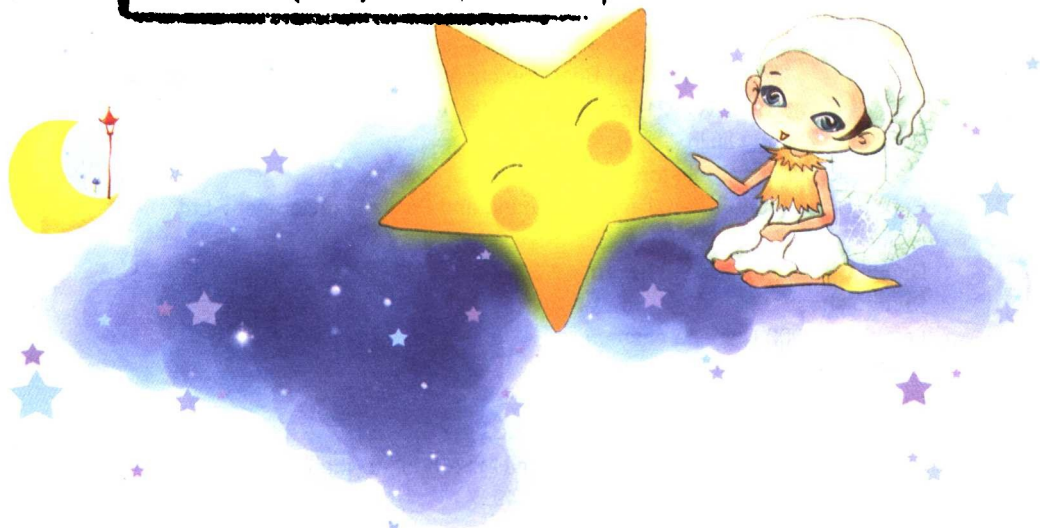
The Magic Fairies

The Ring of the Succubae

江苏工业学院图书馆

藏书章

Xiao Ling Bing Dang
translated by David Lancaster



The legal affairs for this book have been handled by
Xiao Ling Ding Dang's long-standing legal counsel.
(telephone: 86-592-2680710)

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

女妖的戒指;英文/晓玲叮当著;(美)戴维译.

-南昌:二十一世纪出版社,2007.8

(魔法小仙子)

ISBN 978-7-5391-3850-3

I.女… II.①晓…②戴… III.①英语-语言读物②童话-作品集-中国-当代 IV.H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2007)第116221号

The Ring of the Succubae / Xiao Ling Ding Dang

Publishing & Circulation: 21st Century Publishing House

(No.75 Zi'an Road,Nanchang, Jiangxi 330009)

www.21cccc.com cc21@163.net

Publisher: Zhang Qiulin

Marketing: Xinhua Bookstore

Printing Press: Shenzhen Jianrong Printing and Packaging Company Ltd.

First Edition: August 2007

Dimensions: 889mm x 1310mm 1/32

Printed sheet: 3.75

Length: 100000 Chinese characters

Illustrations: 48 inserted illustrations

Number: ISBN 978-7-5391-3850-3

In case of a printing problem, please mail this book to the Publishing
House for a replacement. 86-791-6524997



Fairy Glossary

MELON: those who believe in fairies

SPUD: those who do not believe in fairies

MELON LOVER: cute and adorable

SPUD LOVER: disgusting and awful

HOLLOW: represents ugliness

CABBAGE: represents beauty

MUDDY VEGETABLE: once a name-calling slang and
now a self-styled appellation of rhizome plants

KOHLRABI: muddle-headed and stupid

GARLIC: smart

GRASSHEAD: stupid

BITTER MELON: someone who makes a face

CARROT: someone confused or muddle-headed

TURNIP: someone thinking clearly

Content

1 | Introduction



2 | The Ring of the Succubae



23 | The Training School



42 | The Three Supreme Carrots



61 | From Melon Bird to Vegetable Bird



84 | The Magic Wheat Grains of a Grey Mouse

115 | Postscript

Introduction

As everyone knows, fairy stories are stored carefully inside flowers. And if you know how many different types of flowers there are on the earth, and then you know just how many fairy stories there are as well.

After reading "The Growing and Shrinking Spell", not a few readers contacted me, and told me they would like to read more fairy stories, and the sooner the better at that.

Unfortunately, the guardians of the fairy stories were of a different mind. For long-standing fairy tradition forbids telling fairy stories to outsiders during the rainy season. The reason for this is that the stories themselves are extraordinarily delicate. And when the climate turns cold and damp, their pages grow clammy and risk spoiling. This is why the guardians of the stories spend all of the wet season chanting special drying spells to help preserve the pages and keep them comfortable if slightly moist.

But now the wet season is nearing its end at long last, and the fairy guardians have time to stop and catch their breath. Careful inspection of their treasured books has shown that they've survived the wet season in fine shape, and are much the same as before. Not a single one seems to have been harmed by the inclement weather.

And so the requests for more fairy stories will soon be filled. Not long ago, the guardians of the stories drew a magical golden screw out from a special crystal box. With a light tapping on its head, the screw began to turn and sing:

*A bean and a melon,
Spin and spin one by one,
Going round and round,
A beautiful gardenia burst out.*

A clean and white apple blossom appeared suddenly, fluttering magically in mid-air. Slowly, the flower wafted down into the outstretched hands of the story guardians. A quick count showed one, two, three, four, no... a total of five petals. And what could this mean but permission to publish another five fairy stories. Fantastic!

So now let us step into the magical fairy world as five completely new stories unravel for our pleasure. But as we read please also heed the warnings of the story guardians, and keep ourselves well washed and clean. For books and stories are fragile creatures, and even though the wet season may have passed, a little bit of grime and dirt is enough to soil the best of them, and change them from homes for bookworms to those for grubs.

The Ring of the Succubae

Like all fairy children at the age when they lose their baby teeth, the Fairy Marigold was mischievous beyond belief.

One day, Marigold came up with an ingenious way to get under the skin of his teacher.

As you may remember, fairy children don't go to school in traditional schoolhouses. The Fairy Academy is instead a flowerpot filled with sunflowers. No-one talks about "going to class". They all talk about "going to pot". And when school is let off for the day all of the students "pot down". Classes are taught by teachers hovering in midair on the back of a hummer. That is the special bench given by the Fairy Board of Education.





As fairy children go, Marigold was particularly fond of playing pranks. On this day, he took a special sort of glue and spread it on the inside wings of his teacher's hummer. When class began, the glue slowly started to heat up and melt. And so it happened that Professor Frumpus was flying back and forth across the room giving a lecture when his hummer suddenly began to flutter about wildly. Then the hummer lost complete control of its wings, sending both it and the Professor crashing to the ground with a giant "kaboom".

Professor Frumpus was so dazed by his fall. He sat on the ground for a moment, stars swimming before his eyes. The moment he collected himself enough to hear the laughter roaring out from his students, he knew at once that he'd become the butt of a practical joke.

Frumpus pulled himself to his feet and straightened his gown, his flinty eyes locking on each of his students in turn.

"Who is responsible for this?"

Several students glanced at Marigold from the corner of their eyes. He was sitting there with a foolish grin on his face just like the others, acting as if he was no wiser about the incident than anyone else.

Professor Frumpus understood at once, and anger flooded into his eyes until his face looked like that of a giant bull ready to spit blood. He sneered through a crack in his lips.

"I'll teach you to play tricks on me, Marigold!"

The game was up and Professor Frumpus came bounding across the flower pot to grab him by the ear. Marigold wriggled out of his grasp and darted out of the flower pot.

He darted away like an arrow taking flight, and it didn't take him very long to disappear completely out of sight. But even so Marigold continued to fly onwards and onwards until his heart was beating so hard he needed to rest. That was when he saw a soft patch of heather on the ground ahead, and he decided to fly over and rest his weary wings.

Marigold had no sooner settled into the soft heather, panting like a dog on a hot summer day, when he was surprised by an awful, snake-like voice:

"Look! If it isn't a little fairy..."

A black, haggard fingernail plucked him up from out of the soft grass.





The Magic Fairies

Marigold wanted to fly away, but was caught tight like a mouse in the talons of an eagle. He was so tired that he could barely flutter his wings, while his legs hung into the air like wobbly strings of spaghetti.

Marigold looked up to see what exactly had taken him in hand.

The face he saw was grimy, with two wicked eyes hovering over a cackling mouth:

"Little fairy? Do you know who I am?"

Marigold took a second look. And dear heavens, could this be anyone but the wicked Ogress Baba?

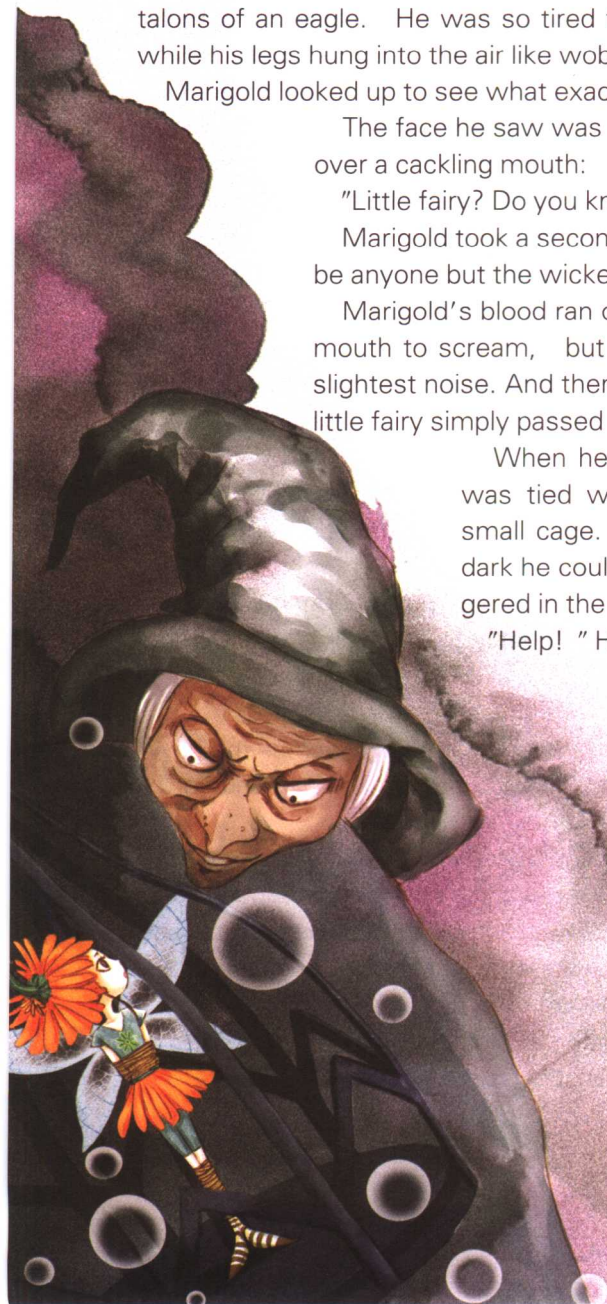
Marigold's blood ran cold as fear seized him. He opened his mouth to scream, but he couldn't seem to make even the slightest noise. And then his head began to swim and the poor little fairy simply passed out.

When he woke, he discovered that his body was tied with ropes and had been placed in a small cage. The room outside the cage was so dark he couldn't see the walls, and a foul smell lingered in the air.

"Help! " He cried as loudly as he could.

"Now that you're a guest of mine, there's no need for you to yell like that," a voice answered him from out of the gloom.

As Marigold's eyes adjusted to the darkness, the fairy could make more sense of his surroundings. He could now see the Ogress Baba glaring at him a short distance away. Her eyes were filled with blood-lust and the look scared





Marigold so much he trembled:

"What... what... what are you going to do to me?"

"What am I going to do?" The wicked witch laughed. "Now that's a good question! First of all, I'm going to use you as a lab rat to test how effective my fairy-eradication potions are turning out. If that doesn't work, then I suppose you'll have to be my Ace of Spades in negotiations with the King Pully. And if he doesn't meet my conditions, I'll just cut you into fine slices of fairy meat and make you into a salad with some poisoned celery." The witch cackled. "My mouth is watering just thinking of it! I will have to cut out your heart first, because the heart of a young fairy child is priceless, and is one of the main ingredients in potions of enchantment."

The Fairy Marigold was so petrified hearing this that all of his hair stood up on end and he began to sob:

"I don't want to be a lab rat... I don't want to be any Ace of Spades... I don't want to be tossed in a salad and... my heart is my heart. It isn't an ingredient for anything!"

The Ogress laughed coldly.

"Why are you crying? Look at how useful you'll be. Or how useful parts of you will be at least. You're like a little golden statue and should be pleased that you're so valuable!"

This only caused the Fairy Marigold to cry even harder. He imagined he was only moments away from being a lab rat in the evil witch's experiments, or being cut into pieces or having his heart clawed out. And who wouldn't cry? Because this would be a terrible thing to happen to such a young fairy, and especially one which didn't even have its adult teeth yet.

Marigold didn't dare close his eyes that evening. He was afraid that if he fell asleep, and that sleeping might give the witch the opportunity to strike. So the fairy just lay down in his cage, his entire body aching. And as he lay there he regretted that he had ever played such a foolish prank on his teacher, and wished that he had stayed in school and let Professor Frumpus storm over and spank him a thousand times if that was what it would take, because at least then he wouldn't be a prisoner of the Ogress Baba.

It was deep into the night when Marigold heard a shuffling sound come





from one of the corners of the room. The sound slithered closer and closer, and Marigold started to sweat and his hair stood up on end. Could this be the old witch's poisonous snake?

A shadow of a figure appeared before the cage, scaring Marigold so much he crouched down in the middle of the cage. Then the figure spoke to him in a hushed voice:

"Sh... Be quiet! I've come here to rescue you from the witch, Master."

In no time flat, the figure had opened the cage and rushed in to release the Fairy Marigold.

Marigold took a closer look at his rescuer in the dim light. It seemed to be a small creature about the size of a potato and as pure black as a lump of coal. Two round and wrinkled ears hung down the sides of its head. The ears were about a third as large as the whole creature.

Marigold was quickly freed from his ropes, the strip of tape the witch had thought to put across his mouth. The little hunchbacked figure spoke softly:

"Listen to me, Master! There's a mouse hole in the corner of the room. It leads to another exit by the Fairy Lake. As soon as you're in the hole you should be safe."

"Who are you?"

"I'm a Fungal and my name is Caicai. You'd better go quickly."

"Thank you for freeing me!"

When he heard this, Caicai made a pained expression. He scratched one of his over-sized ears uncomfortably:

"There's no need to thank me, Master. Just go quickly and be careful not to wake up the witch."

Marigold waved goodbye to the small creature, and slipped into the mouse hole. It didn't take him very long to find himself at the Fairy Lake. He filled his lungs with the fresh night air. The lake shimmered under the moon like a priceless jade mirror, while the air was filled with the quiet music of insects buzzing around. To Marigold, who had just escaped a living nightmare, everything was more beautiful than he could have imagined.

And you can imagine the scene when the muddy and grimy Marigold showed up at the flowerpot.



Professor Frumpus bounded over and scooped up Marigold. To Marigold surprise, Professor Frumpus did not spank him, but to hold Marigold tightly in his arms and gave a kiss!

Marigold's classmates all swarmed around him.

"Where did you go? We all went looking for you."

"Professor Frumpus was so worried he almost cried. He said that he shouldn't have been so mean."

"We were just preparing a search party to go look for you."

...

When Marigold told them his story of the Ogress Baba, some of the more timid students couldn't stop themselves from shaking and crying out in fear.

When the story was over, one of the students asked:

"What sort of thing is a Fungal?"

Professor Frumpus hesitated to explain.

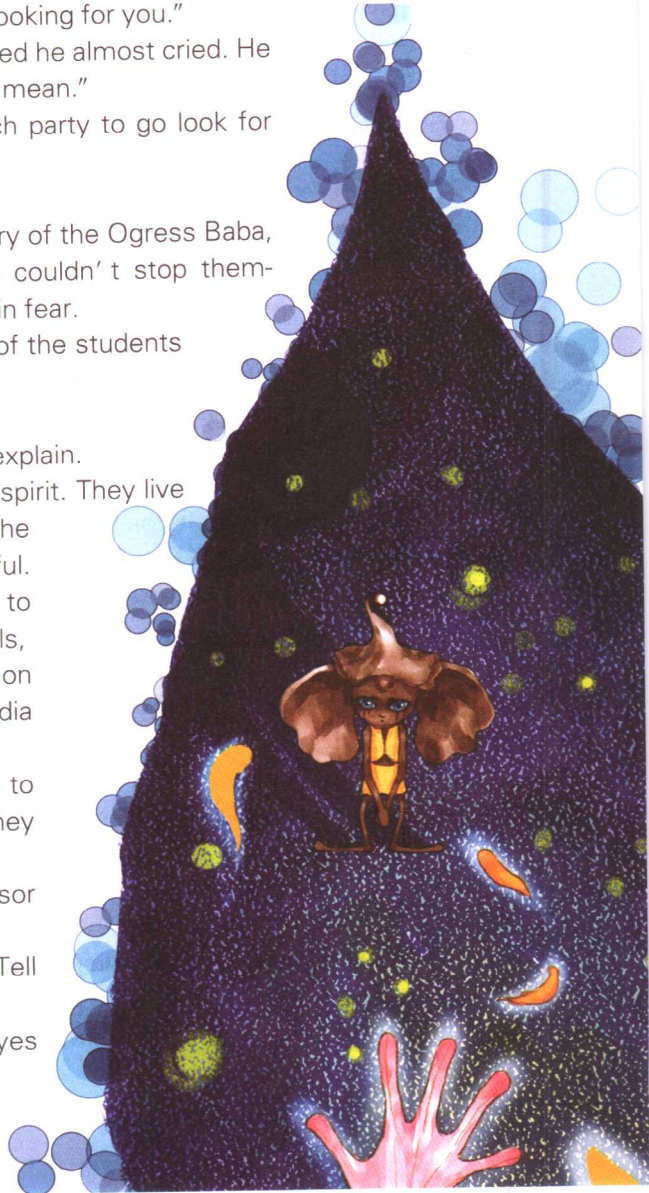
"The Fungals are a kind of wood spirit. They live in rotting tree trunks and consider the name 'Fungal' to be deeply shameful. The King Pully doesn't want you to learn very much about the Fungals, which is why there isn't a chapter on them in the Great Fairy Encyclopedia of the Occult.

"Why doesn't the King want us to know about the Fungals? Are they evil spirits?"

"I can't say any more," Professor Frumpus said.

"Oh... come on Professor. Tell us!" The children clamored.

Maybe it was the look in their eyes





that finally moved him, but Professor Frumpus finally decided to tell them more.

"The Fungal saved the life of our dear Marigold. That shows that they are good people. But most people consider the Fungals a lowly sort of race. For all of their lives they are slaves to others. All of the other animals order them around. All you need to do is stamp your feet, spit on the ground and say, 'Pah! Fungal Slave!' and a Fungal will come to do your bidding. You can make them sweep the floor, cook for you, wash your clothes or do anything else. They will be your servant and do whatever you want. The King Pully believes that all living things are equal and so doesn't want you to learn this. He's afraid that there might be some among you who will try to get a Fungal for a servant. But now that you know the story of the Fungals, I need to insist that none of you must tell what you've learned to the other fairy children. And none of you can go and make a wood spirit your servant. If anyone does, I will be completely disappointed in you."

With that, the bell marking the end of school began to chime. The other fairy children all hustled out the door, leaving Marigold sitting alone and dazed at his desk.

"School is out. Why don't you leave?" Professor Frumpus asked.

"I'm sorry I was mischievous Professor, putting glue on the wings of your hummer like that." Marigold lowered his head.

"It doesn't matter. Finding and correcting one's errors is part of being a good person. In any case, you've had quite the lesson, and I don't have the heart to discipline you any further." Professor Frumpus patted him on the head.

Marigold lifted his head and looked at Professor Frumpus.

"The Fungal who saved me was a pitiful creature. How can he be a slave for his entire life? When I thanked him, he had a look of terror on his face. And he even said, 'There's no need to thank me, Master.' I don't understand this at all."

"In the eyes of a servant, everything they do is something that needs being done, and needs no thanks for it."

"But Caicai saved my life! If it wasn't for him who's to say I wouldn't al-



ready be part of a salad working its way down the Ogress Baba's threat? I need to go and find him, and tell him how grateful I am."

"I'd suggest you don't try that."

"But I have to." Marigold wracked his brains in thought.

Starting that day, every time school let out for the day, Marigold spent his time walking back and forth around the forest. Every time he would see an old or rotten trunk, he would duck his head in for a closer look. And then one day, he finally found a fallen log covered with old-growth tree fungus.

"Cacai? Are you here?" Marigold knocked on the trunk, sending a hollow ring through the sagging wood.

It didn't take long for the quizzical face of a Fungal to poke its small head out of a crack in the trunk.

"Who are you?"

"I'm the Fairy Marigold. Does the wood spirit Caicai live here?"

The Fungal answered him meekly.

"I'd ask the worthy fairy to call us Fungals, not wood spirits. The name Fungals is much more suitable given our place in this word. And you should know how to get Caicai if you want. All you need to do is spit and stamp your foot on the ground, and say..."

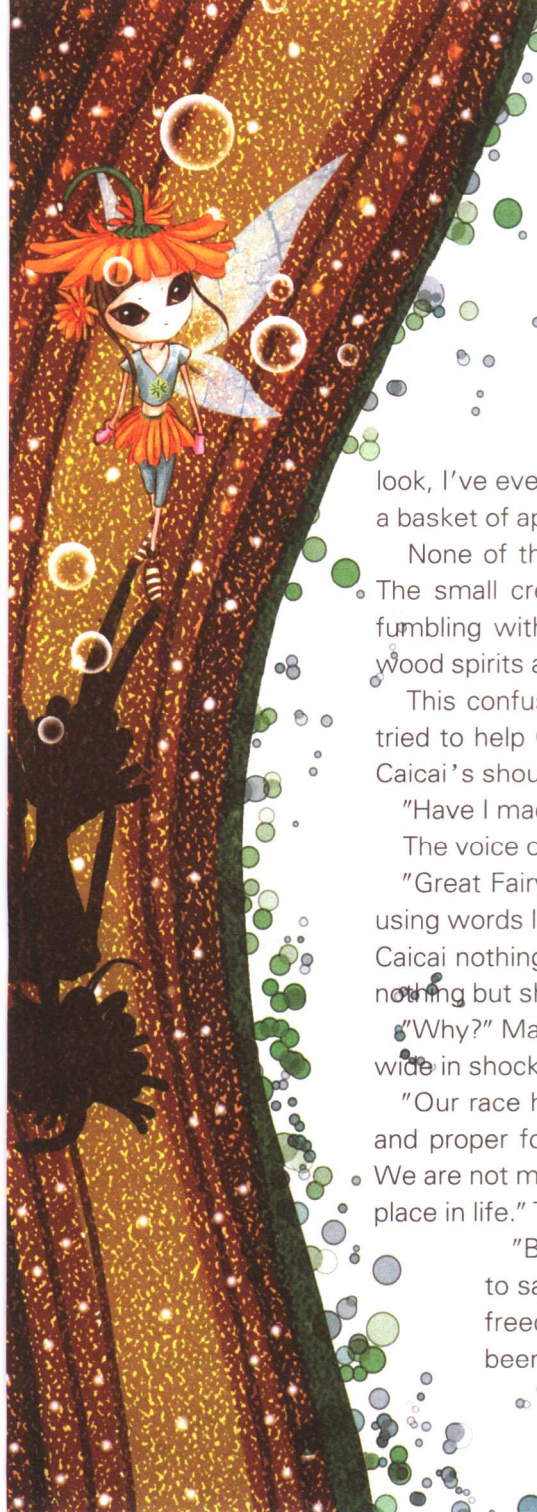
"Oh. But I don't want to order him... That is really rude. I need to find him in person."

"Oh... well if that's the case you'd better come in." The wood spirit's voice was low and apologetic. It stepped aside to let Marigold enter the log.

There was very little light inside the rotting trunk, and the air was filled with moldy smell. Marigold walked into the log, and countless Fungals poured out to see him as he passed, bowing deeply as if he were the king of a small country paying a surprise visit to a peasant hamlet. Marigold couldn't help but think that maybe the reason all of the Fungals seemed to be hunchbacks was because they spent so much time bowing down before others.

Marigold soon found herself facing a wizened old wood spirit with a lengthy beard. The Fungal who had brought him approached the old spirit and whispered something to the old spirit.

The old wood spirit motioned for Marigold to take a seat on a thick cushion.



"Tell Caicai to come quickly," he called out loudly.

Caicai arrived and stood sheepishly before the old spirit. Then he turned towards Marigold and bowed deeply.

Marigold hurried over and helped him up.

"Caicai, I came to say thank you. And look, I've even brought you a present!" Marigold held out a basket of apples he had brought.

None of this seemed to make Caicai the least happy. The small creature groveled on the ground, his hands fumbling with his ears as if he was in great pain. The wood spirits all looked at Caicai with nothing but scorn.

This confused Marigold, and so he stepped over and tried to help Caicai to his feet. Then he put his hand on Caicai's shoulder and asked him directly.

"Have I made you angry? Are you sick?"

The voice of the old wood spirit rang through the log.

"Great Fairy. It would be for the better if you stopped using words like 'thank you'. This sort of speech can bring Caicai nothing but pain. And if you must know, they do nothing but shame our people."

"Why?" Marigold asked in confusion, his eyes opening wide in shock.

"Our race has been born to serve, and it is only meet and proper for us to carry out services for our masters. We are not made for being thanked. This is a matter of our place in life." The wood spirit's voice was deep and low.

"But... but..." Marigold didn't know quite what to say. "I really have to thank Caicai. If he hadn't freed me from Ogress Baba's cage, I might have been her next day's breakfast."



"What? Caicai freed you from the cage of the Ogress Baba? He?" The wood spirit lifted up his head and gave him a cold, quizzical look.

"Yes. He saved my life." Marigold nodded.

Marigold hadn't expected that the old spirit would be enraged by this, but anger swelled into its face. The old creature pointed a shaking finger at Caicai and bellowed with rage.

"So... so you've set yourself against the traditions of our ancestors, you ingrate..."

Caicai shrank into himself. He started hitting himself on the face, and muttered.

"All my fault... All my fault... But when I heard the Ogress say she was going to eat the fairy... I didn't want the fairy to be eaten."

It didn't take long for the little Fungal's face was covered with tears. Marigold stood where he was, stunned by the display. Then he walked over and used part of his smock to wipe the little Fungal's face clean of tears. Or he tried, at least. Because whenever he reached out to help him, Caicai blocked his arm and shrank further away.

Marigold was shocked at what was happening, and began to wonder for the first time if perhaps he shouldn't have come. But what was the cause of all of this? He looked towards the old wood spirit for some sort of explanation.

The wood spirit cleared his throat.

"Caicai is a servant of the Ogress Baba. He is under orders to go to her every day and serve her as is her wont. And perhaps he does this unwillingly. But if one is a servant one is not free to disregard the wishes of one's master. And the Ogress Baba is his master, and so he should have been loyal to her. But now he has betrayed his master, the entire Fungals race will have to atone for his sin."

The old wood spirit sighed deeply, and a pool of tears began to well within his eyes.

Marigold was unsure of what to say, and so just stayed quiet. He slowly and silently began to back away from the assembly, the Fungals behind him bowing deeply as he passed. Seeing so many of the wood spirits bent over



like little shrimps waiting to be swept into a net, Marigold couldn't help but feel heavy at heart, and sadder than he had ever been.

Could it be that he had made a mistake? But what could that mistake have been? Marigold wracked his brains trying to think things through, but couldn't make the slightest sense of things.

The words of the old Fungal chieftain lingered in his mind. If what he said was correct, then every single Fungals would suffer because of the actions of Caicai. What sort of punishment had he brought upon them? When he thought of this, Marigold felt so sad he wanted to cry.

No. That would be impermissible. I simply must think of a way to help them.

What Marigold really wanted to understand was why the wood spirits were "born to serve", as the old chieftain put it. Who was responsible for putting this regulation in place?

Professor Frumpus could only shake his head helplessly in answer when Marigold asked him this question. The problem was far too mysterious, and not even he knew the answer. But the Professor did give him a very helpful suggestion.

"Why don't you go and ask the Master Magician of the water spirits? He is one of the most knowledgeable spirits. Perhaps he can answer your question."

"Oh," the magician said when Marigold came to ask. "I don't know a great deal about the Fungals race. To tell the truth, they're quite easy for people to overlook." The old magician stroked his long, white beard as he spoke.

Marigold was so disappointed when he heard this that he had to bite his lip to keep from breaking out in tears.

"But," the magician continued. "We can always consult the 'Mysteries of Spirit Magic'. It's the most comprehensive encyclopedia we have and perhaps it knows something." The magician smiled as he spoke.

His warmth forced a small smile out of Marigold. And so the old magician took the great encyclopedia out from within its stone chest, drew a circle on