

# The wonders of Fairyland

BY AMY LANE

Ally put her favorite three stuffed animals in the little red wagon with the squeaky wheel, covered by her best blanket. She put her two favourite books in the bottom of the wagon, underneath the knitted bunny, who liked books best and would keep them safe.

She wore her second special-est most prettiful dress, because she had to wear her first most prettiful dress to her Uncle Kyle's wedding in two weeks. Her dad had put her black curly hair up in her special pom-pom pigtails that made her look her cutest, and she gave her reflection one extra check to make sure she looked her best.

Then she pulled her wagon into the kitchen and asked Daddy if he could make her a sandwich.

"Okay, kitten," her father said, pulling out the turkey. "Isn't it early for lunch?"

"Peanut butter, Daddy. The fairies don't like meat."

Dad pulled out the peanut butter. "Of course. I should have known."

"It's okay, Daddy." She smiled indulgently at him. Grownups weren't expected to know all the rules of fairies. It said so in one of her books.

When her father had finished the sandwich and had wrapped it up in wax paper, he added an apple and a juice box. "In the wagon or..."

"You can put it in my bag," she said proudly. She held out the pretty knitted pouch her Uncle Kyle had made her. "It's a senchals bag."

"You mean an 'essentials' bag?"

"Uh-huh. For all the senchals when you visit the fairies!"

"Are you going to ask Sadie to go with you?" her father asked, wrapping everything in a paper towel and then adding it to the bag.

"Okay. But she needs to change. You have to wear your best when you go to visit the fairies."

Sadie was playing in the sprinklers next door, so Ally put the bag over her head and one shoulder, and left the wagon on the walkway. The fairies lived in the back yard and there was no sense in hauling the wagon over the grass when there was a perfectly good path.

"Sadie! Do you want to come visit the fairies with me?"

"Why?"

Sadie didn't read as many books as Ally. "Because they're nice. And even if we don't see them, we can pretend they're there, and they'll be flattered." Sadie smiled widely. "Right now? I can go right now?"

"Put on a pretty dress. Fairies are fancy," Ally said. "And I have lunch. It's in my senchals bag."

"Ooh—I like your bag! Can I have one?"

"My uncle made it," Ally said loftily.

"And he's getting married next week. After that maybe he'll make you one."

"Your uncle knits? Shouldn't his wife knit?"

"He's marrying another uncle," Ally said.

"Boys can't marry boys!"

"They can too! My Uncle Cliff and Uncle Kyle are getting married! I have a new dress! That's why I can wear this one to see the fairies!"

"Can girls marry girls?" Sadie asked, blue eyes round and huge.

"Of course," Ally scoffed. "Why?"

"Because I have a pretend wedding dress in my costume box. Maybe I can wear that and we can get married when we visit the fairies."

"Okay. Go and change. And ask your mum for lunch."

Sadie came running out a few minutes later, suitably attired and with a lunch box of her own. They both agreed that the lunch box wasn't as good as the senchals bag, but it would do.



That night, Ally asked her mother if she could Skype with Uncle Kyle. She sat on her mum's lap, so excited.

"Uncle Kyle! Guess what?"

"What's up Ally-kitten!"

"Me and my friend Sadie went into the backyard to have lunch with the fairies!" Ally wriggled in excitement.

"I put my lunch in your senchals bag and we had the best time!"

"That's wonderful—did you see any fairies?"

"No. They were all somewhere else today, and I read the fairy book three times."

"That's too bad, kitten."

Ally's expression fell until she remembered the reason she'd called.

"I have something important to tell you," she said, lowering her voice and looking at him soberly.

"I'm listening." Her Uncle Kyle was so handsome. When he was listening, she felt like she ruled the world.

"You don't have to be nervous anymore," she said.

"About what?"

"About getting married to Uncle Cliff. You said you were nervous and had butterflies. It's okay."

"Really, squirt? How do you know?"

"Cause Sadie and I got married a dozen and a half times while we were waiting for the fairies. It was so much fun, and nothing bad happened at all. You'll be fine."

Uncle Kyle's kind eyes got bright and shiny. "I will?"

"Uh-huh." She nodded.

"Thanks, kitten. I'll tell Uncle Cliff."

Uncle Cliff's hand appeared on Kyle's shoulder, and Ally knew he'd heard already. "I'm sure he'll be happy to know."