

## Chapter 1

*The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve;  
...to bed; 'tis almost fairy time'*

**B**uzzz! Thump!  
Lynn woke up with a start. Drawn so quickly out of a dark and perilous dream, for a moment she had no idea where she was. The noise, as if a very large insect had become trapped and was trying to get out, made her heart race. An early November moon, casting its silvery glow onto her narrow bed, lit her face as she turned, now fully awake and a little frightened, toward the window. Nothing there. With fragments of her dream and a strange unsettling poem circling inside her head, she lay for a while listening, her eyes searching the room in the moon's dim light. She looked over at her twin brother Lyle to see if he was awake, but he slept on, thumb planted firmly in his mouth. Turning her eyes toward the water-stained ceiling, she tried to pinpoint the sound. As she listened she had the oddest feeling, that somehow their lives were about to change.

*Buzzz! Bump! Thump! Thump! Buzzzz!*

"Lyle, wake up!" Lynn whispered. "What's that funny noise?"

Lyle shifted around in his bed, then lay flat and squinted through the window at the moon.

"I don't hear nothin'," he grunted.

"Shhh!"

"It's prob'ly just a fly." Lyle yawned noisily and, blowing a strand of hair out of his eyes, squeezed them shut.

"Don't make so much noise! Be quiet!" Lynn was sure the sound was much too loud for a fly.

Lyle tried to lie still and listen. He was about to turn over, thumb back

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\* From *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare

in mouth, when the buzzing started again, banging against the window and circling madly above their heads. A feather-light wash of air carrying the slightest smell of honey fanned his face.

Climbing out of bed, Lynn pulled the string dangling from the room's single bare bulb. The room lit up, and she pointed at the ceiling.

"There it is! See?"

What appeared to be an oversized green dragonfly dipped and zoomed in and out of the light. Standing on his bed and deftly snatching the fragile creature out of mid-air, Lyle held it between his fingers, turning it over for a better look. His eyes nearly popped out of his head.

"Holy Moley! It's a little person!"

"Let me see, Lyle, let me see!" Jumping quickly onto her brother's bed, Lynn knocked him noisily to the floor. The little being flew out of his hand and up to the ceiling again, this time gripping the tattered ceiling paper with long fingers.

"WHAT'S GOIN' ON UP THERE? ARE YOU TWO OUTTA BED? YA KNOW WHAT I TOLD YA BEFORE—AN' I MEAN IT!"

The loud, grating voice of their foster parent, Mrs. Philomena Bagge, bellowed from the bottom of the stairs, giving the children more than the usual goose-bumps.

Lynn switched off the light and they both listened for her step, but she stayed below, muttering curses at all children, "Specially those two brats!"

"Look what you made me do!" Lyle whispered, switching the light back on. "Now I can't reach it!"

"Is it really a little person? Did you see its face?"

"Yes, I saw its face!" He made a face at her, then turned his attention to the creature hanging above his head. "Now how're we gonna get it down?"

Lynn thought for a minute, then tiptoed to her dresser. Taking a piece of string and some sticky tape from a drawer she covered the end of the string with the tape, sticky side out. She gave it to her brother, who was much better than she was at throwing things. He flung the taped string several times at the shivering little figure and finally managed to stick the tape to a wing. He gently reeled it in, fluttering and squeaking, toward him. Lynn now saw, to her great surprise, a tiny delicate human-like form with filigreed dragonfly wings. Large dark frightened eyes stared up at them, but in an instant the little creature swooped away. Lyle again pulled it in and cupping his hands, held it firmly between them. It bit his finger.

“OUCH!”

Footsteps clattered up the stairs. Lynn swiftly shut off the light and the twins dove into their beds. Covering the wee manikin with his blanket, Lyle could hear a humming sound. Lifting the blanket slightly, he whispered, “Shhh!” then quickly dropped it again.

The door burst open, and a large, perhaps once attractive, red-faced woman stomped into the room, henna-red hair hanging from hair-pins stuck in every which way. Switch in hand, watching for any slight movement, she scowled into the darkness. But the twins had become well versed in keeping quiet around this harsh lady.

She tapped them on their backsides with the switch and grunted, “You better be asleep!” Then, muttering curses, she stumped noisily back down the stairs to her half-eaten piece of pie and soon-to-be-refilled glass of sherry.

Lynn quietly turned the light back on while Lyle dumped his collection of agates out of their glass container. He carefully reached under the covers. Drawing out the whatever-it-was, he gently poked it into the jar and quickly clapped on the lid.

“Be careful, Lyle! It has to breathe!” Lynn whispered, peering at the frightened creature. “Oh, it’s beautiful! It looks like a fairy!”

Lyle loosened the lid slightly. They watched the ‘fairy’ bump itself against the invisible wall of glass. Then it sat down and began to call, a tiny, high-pitched keening sound that made them think of a mouse squealing. It held its hands out to them, as if pleading for its freedom.

“Poor little thing,” sighed Lynn. “Perhaps we should let it go.”

“No way! If this thing’s real, I’m takin’ it to school fer show an’ tell! I bet nobody else has a live fairy!” Lyle climbed back into bed, pulled up the covers, and was soon fast asleep, dreaming of people paying real money just to see their lucky find.

Although he was Lynn’s twin, Lyle looked and acted nothing like his sister. Lynn tended to think first and act later, but Lyle, though certainly not unkind, was a little more inclined to rush into things. His face was rounder, his eyes hazel to her green, and his hair blonde to her brown. She was a little taller than he, and to his credit he sometimes worried about her being so skinny. But his only real desire was for them both to escape life in the Bagge Lady’s house.

Lynn couldn’t sleep for ages for worrying about the little prisoner. It looked fairly young. She knew little about fairies, or even whether it was a boy or girl. Perhaps it had lost its parents the same as her and Lyle, or maybe it was just lost.

She crept out of bed, first making sure Lyle was asleep, and held the jar up to the moonlight which now shone fully in the window. The tiny sprite looked miserably back at her, its lovely gossamer dragonfly wings all adroop. On an impulse, Lynn opened the window and removed the lid from the jar. With a leap, the little creature flew from its prison and out into the bright night. Feeling a little guilty she watched it go. But seeming to sense her discomfort, it quickly returned, planting a feathery kiss on her cheek. Then with a wave it disappeared, its wings a glimmer of silver in the now lowering light of the moon. Leaving the window ajar, Lynn got back into bed, both glad and sorry for what she had done. She snuggled down and decided not to worry about what Lyle would say, at least until morning.

## About The Author

Originally from Toronto, I was born in 1934, to an actress mother and an artist father who told my sister and me delightfully silly stories on our walks to the museum and art gallery. I am afraid these have influenced me to this day.

I came to BC in 1962 with my husband George, and four small daughters, travelling across country, (with many breakdowns) in an old Volkswagon van. Maple Ridge became our home and a fifth daughter was born there. I went to Douglas College for several years, taking courses in art and art history, creative writing, literature, drama and philosophy. After my husband passed away in a tugboat accident in 1972, I carried on with college and sold my sculpture to supplement my income. I have painted sets, two murals, (one in Maple Ridge and another in the works for Duncan, B.C. and had my play, 'The Tinder Box', staged at two theatres.



I have been a member of B.C. Nature for many years, enjoying the outdoors and helping to fight for the those who cannot speak for themselves.

I came to Chemainus, B.C. with my partner Gordon in 1998 where I paint, work in stone, and write stories for children and young adults, as well as caring for a large garden.