

Nature's Violet Children

A folktale

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Source: Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education, may be used with citation.

Once on a sunny hill in the woods grew many violets. They had slept quietly through the long winter, tucked up snug and warm in the soft, white snow-blankets that King Winter had sent Mother Nature for her flower babies. Jack Frost had gone pouting over the hills because the little sunbeams would not play with him, and they spoiled his fancy pictures. The tiny raindrops knocked at the door of Mother Nature's great, brown house; and the birds called to the flowers to wake up.

The violets raised their strong, hardy leaves, lifted up their dainty heads, and were glad because spring had come again. While they were so happy, a little girl named Ruth came to the woods in search of wild flowers. "How pretty those violets are," she said. "I wish I could stay and watch the buds open, but I will take some of them with me and keep them in water, and they will remind me of this sunny hill. Perhaps they will blossom."

Then the violets were frightened and whispered, "Please don't take us!" Ruth did not hear them. She pulled stem after stem until her small hands were full.

When Ruth got home, she put the buds into a vase of water, and set them in an open window where they could see the blue sky and feel the kisses of the sunbeams. But, the poor little violets drooped for a time, they were so homesick, and whispered to each other, "Let us give up and die!" A beautiful canary in a cage over their heads sang "Cheer up! Chirrup!" but they would not listen to him at first.

By and by, they said, "Why do you sing that to us? How can we be happy away from our beautiful home?"

Still the bird sang, "Cheer up! Chirrup! The sun is smiling at you and I am singing to you. We are trying to make you glad. How nice it would be if you would only blossom and make some one happy instead of hanging your heads and trying to die. Do you think I like to be shut up in here? If someone would leave the door of my cage open, I would spread my wings and fly out of the window, far away to the green woods and the blue sky. But, while I am here, I may as well sing and be glad. Cheer up! Chirrup!"

"Perhaps he is right," said the buds, and they lifted up their heads and began to grow. One bright spring morning Mother Nature passed by the window and gave them each a lovely violet cap. Then they were glad, and Ruth was happy, too, because her buds had blossomed.

The cheery canary sang his sweetest song to them. The whole day was bright because Mother Nature's little violet children had tried their best to be happy and so had made others happy, too. As the great red sun went down into the west, he heard the happy bird still singing, "Cheer up! Chirrup!"

What is a lesson people can learn from this story?

Underline the parts of the story that show that is the lesson you can learn.