



We perceive fabrics with all our senses.
They are lively, versatile and transforming.
Each fabric has its own character! Fabrics are pieces of art.
What a pleasure to create fabrics and to work with fabrics!



Emilia's Forest

The forest, nestled in the soft rolling green hills and valleys of the Appenzell, was the place where Emilia felt comfortable and happy. The girl would sneak out of the house whenever possible in order to play underneath the tall fir trees with their big protruding roots. Emilia always thought that the tree roots looked like long toes thrust into the ground to stand upright and strong, especially at times when one of the piercing winds swept over the usually peaceful and soothing valley. Emilia felt snug sitting on the soft forest floor, building houses with pieces of bark and little branches. She collected cones of different sizes to represent people, forming an entire family. All of them were fitted with a small piece of fabric from her mother's sewing box. Emilia collected every piece of fabric her mother didn't have use for as she was fascinated by their colors and their materials. Her fir cone family got beds made of fern leaves and the mother fir cone got a stove woven from twigs. While engrossed in her play, Emilia forgot about time. Often it was one of her brothers who came to fetch her. They dragged her home for dinner, impatiently, in order to go back to their soccer game. Mother sighed: "oh girl" and shook her head. Father grumbled words like fancy ideas and dreaming. Only grandma pushed Emilia's unruly hair from her forehead and said with a soft voice: "Emilia you have the fantasy of a blooming garden".

It was a late Summer day with the light of the sun sending golden rays through the trees when Emilia once again sat on the soft forest floor with her back leaning against her favorite fir tree Pina, watching the play of light and shadow.

"Emilia!" She turned around. Slowly, she got up. "Emilia!"

"Where are you?", Emilia asked.

The voice laughed softly. "Here by the rock next to the fern!"

What Emilia saw took her breath away. A delicate figure, no bigger than the beak of a stork, with white hair and a white dress, looked at Emilia with eyes as green as the fir trees.

"Who are you?", Emilia asked. She noticed that the figure was wearing a cape over her dress which united all the colors of the forest.

"I'm Bella, the forest fairy."

"But how come I can see you? People cannot see fairies."

"That's right, most of the time", answered Bella. "But you are a child. Children are special people because they listen to what their heart tells them."



You are a special person, Emilia! You love the forest, the animals and the plants that live in the forest and you respect them. Take good care of them and don't lose the awe and the love which the creator has put into your heart."

"Bella, may I ask you a question?"

"Yes, if I know the answer...."

"Can the plants speak? Can you hear them? What are the trees saying when they lose their leaves in Autumn and when they are covered with snow in Winter? And do you understand when the water rushes over the rocks in the creek? Are the ants, bugs and centipedes celebrating when Spring arrives? What are the birds, the squirrels, the foxes and deer doing at night when I'm home asleep?"

Bella laughed cheerfully. "Let's sit under a fir tree. When the plants talk....", Bella started, and Emilia took in all of her words.

The sun started setting and Emilia jumped. "I must go home! Will I see you again, Bella?"

"Who knows", said the fairy in a mysterious voice, "but I will make a wish come true for you, a wish you have been harboring since you saw me for the first time. Go check by Pina's roots!"

As Emilia bent down she saw a flowing piece of fabric on the forest floor, gleaming with all the colors of the forest. She picked it up and let it glide through her hands. It was as light as a fern leaf and more finely woven than Emilia had ever seen before. Only then did she notice that it was a cape, a cape like the one Bella was wearing. "How did you know...?"

"Some wishes need not be spoken to be heard", said Bella. "One condition, however: you may only wear the cape on the most important day of your life. Until then it'll be in the care of your fir tree, Pina. "

"But how will I know...?"

"Your heart will tell you. Be well Emilia!". And the fairy disappeared before Emilia could say a word.

A few years had passed since that day. For Emilia, the forest was still a refuge to escape from the grumbling of her teacher at the tailoring business or to find relief from the sticky air in the sewing atelier. It wasn't that she didn't love her profession. Emilia was very skillful and most days she liked her work. Most of all she loved the fabrics, their colors, their patterns and the various materials they were made of.





Often she caught herself envisioning new color combinations and new patterns when she had to redo a seam for the third time or when performing a job she already knew how to do by heart. When Emilia spent time in the forest the ideas came to her easily. She had started to bring along a pen and a notepad in order to put on paper what came to her mind. She created small works of art which she hid under her bed out of fear of being called a dreamer again.

A long day had come to an end. Many clients visited the shop to pick fabrics and to be measured. There was plenty of gossip. With a throbbing head Emilia closed the door of the shop and went her way. Every time Emilia entered the forest she felt like she was in a different world. She enjoyed the soothing calm which felt like a light and airy dress on her skin. Once she reached Pina she put her cheek on the rough bark of its majestic trunk warmed by the sunshine, closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "There are things that never change" Emilia whispered. She leaned onto the trunk and started to draw things she saw, and things she didn't see.

Suddenly, something darkened the fading sunrays shining through the trees above. Emilia looked up and saw the bluest eyes she had ever seen. Her heart started to beat twice as fast as usual. The eyes belonged to a face which fascinated Emilia instantly.

"What are you doing? I do like what I see!"

If Emilia first thought the man she saw was extraordinarily handsome, she was even more overcome by his voice. Deep, manly, composed and soft – all at the same time. She immediately felt at ease. Meanwhile, the person with the blue eyes and the beautiful voice took a seat next to her and she still couldn't speak a word. "Ah, of course, I see", she stuttered with a coarse voice and cleared her throat. The color of her cheeks must have been as red as the ripe rowan berries she had noticed at the entrance to the forest.

"By the way, I'm Eiko", he now said.

Emilia thought that her cheeks probably were of the same color as his ears.

"Emilia" she quickly said and reached out her hand.

"What are you doing here?", asked Eiko and pointed to the notepad on her knees.

"Oh this!. This is just an idea I had."

Emilia learned that Eiko was a farmer. He spoke of his work in the fields, the unsteady weather conditions, the changing of the seasons and the chores with his animals. He too was drawn to the forest where he found calm and peace.

"Have you been to the opening of the forest? Not far from here! A small moor surrounded by trees. I would like to show it to you!"

"I have to go home", said Emilia regretfully.

"How about tomorrow? At the same time, here by the fir tree?" Eiko's eyes were shining, filled with hope and excitement.

"Yes sure, tomorrow, here again", answered Emilia breathlessly.

She ran all the way home, just like she used to run home as a child. But when she lay in bed, sleepless, staring at the ceiling, she knew that she no longer was a child and that she had lost a part of her heart that afternoon.

Emilia and Eiko met each other in the forest as often as they could. He showed her the opening and Emilia was amazed by the multitude of the plants and animals living there. Eiko knew all their names. Emilia drew a picture for him, small enough to fit into his pocket. He guarded it like a treasure.

Emilia showed Eiko her favorite places in the forest and told him the stories she envisioned as a child. While she was talking Eiko regarded her from the side. Her brown eyes were shining, she was so lively, so beautiful, so.... He raised his hand and pushed her hair from her face. And when she turned her head he kissed her. They were comforted by the moss of the forest floor and the trees above them reveled in their love.

A few days later when Emilia waited for Eiko by the Pina she heard a soft voice next to her.

"So you have found him, then".

"Bella!" Emilia said joyfully, "how nice to see you!"

The little white-haired forest fairy smiled. "A little girl you no longer are but I see that you kept your astonishment in your heart. You are exuding joy. It must have been wonderful!"

"What do you mean?" asked Emilia.





Bella smirked, rather unlike a fairy. “Well, what do you think I mean? It’s OK to keep it to yourself!”

Now it was Emilia’s turn to grin: “Oh, that’s what you mean! This is none of your business! Say, are your eyes and ears everywhere?”

“Well yes, the forest has its way of conveying certain things...” Bella rolled her eyes.

“Ah yes, I understand” Emilia said dryly.

“Tell me, Emilia”, said Bella, changing the subject, “do you remember our first meeting and my present?”

“How could I forget! I have often wished I could hold your cape in my hand!”

“Perhaps it’s time to do so”, said Bella, smiling. “But now I have to go. Be well, Emilia!”.

When Eiko arrived later Emilia was so deep in her thoughts that she didn’t notice him right away. But when he embraced her and she felt his warmth she came to life anew and the fire in her heart started blazing. With Eiko’s lips on her ear, soft and caressing, she slipped into a world only lovers can experience.

“Be my wife, Emilia” he whispered.

She knew at once: This was the most important moment in her life! Next to her sat the person with whom she wanted to share her life, forever! “Yes!”, she said, stood up and pulled Eiko next to her. “Yes, I will be your wife!”

Eiko raised her and spun her around. His face was bright like a summer day. Emilia put her head on his neck and laughed. It was at this moment when she saw something emerging from the branches of Pina, floating like a feather. Emilia caught it and saw that it was the cape Bella had presented to her so many years ago. She let the fabric glide through her hands and – marveled! All the pictures Emilia had been drawing from the forest over the years were woven into the delicate fabric.

As the sun was setting behind the trees this evening, two people found fulfillment and joy with each other and the cape of their love engulfed them.



































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