

In the forest of Runea, a place filled with healthy oak and pine trees that lay just outside of the Kingdom of Rocktree, lived a certain family. They bore the name Jenkins, and were known by most for their kindness and hospitality. Some, however, knew them more for the rumors surrounding their property and how extravagant the land was said to be. The family's land was known as *The Terrace of Trees*, a special haven that housed many exotic tree species that grew under special circumstances. The small cottage that the Jenkins family resided in sat underneath a cluster of willow trees. The leafy branches draped pleasantly over the roof, spilling down over the windows and casting a beautiful shade during the hot seasons. The *Grand Orchard* was planted deeper in Runea forest, filled with trees beyond imagination, descriptions only appearing in tales of old.

There were many fascinating trees, with equally delightful names. There was the Blanket Tree, that sprouted thin cooling blankets for hot sleepers in the warm seasons. The tree's bark was smooth and fuzzy, akin to the skin of a peach. The Blanket Tree was a rather short one, only fifteen feet in height. Its trunk was thick enough for one person to wrap their arms around. This tree needed blanket scraps spread around its base, in order to produce various blanket types. A cousin of this species was the Quilt Tree, seventeen feet in height and thick enough for three people to link hands and create a circle around it. The Quilt Tree had patterned branches and the leaves looked as if they were stitched together by tiny hands. This tree, like its cousin, needed quilt patches and blanket filling to thrive.

There were many other trees that sprouted items that the Jenkins family used or traded, such as the Pancake-Biscuit tree, the Yarn Pocket tree, and the Tree of Silky Threads. However, there was one tree that was very special. "The most specialist," as five-year-old Becky, daughter of Ezekiel and Blossom Jenkins declared, when her parents introduced her to the beloved tree.

The jewel of the *Grand Orchard* sat in the middle of the haven. It was a thirty foot tall species known as The Bottle Tree, which was thick enough for seven people to link hands and create a circle around it. The Bottle Tree would sprout glass bottles of varying shapes and sizes that could be used for many things. Every three years, the Bottle Tree would grow large bottle fruits that would house little people known as Bottlings.

Bottlings are normally three to five inches in height. Of course, you get some that fall outside the bell curve (i.e. two inches in height, five-and-a-half inches in height), but they never grow over six inches. These tiny beings look just like humans, but their way of life differs greatly from ours. Bottlings live in the heart of the Bottle Tree, drinking its sap and storing supplies from other trees in their tiny safes. These little beings emerge from the Bottle Tree at night, when there aren't many humans walking around. Human activity means disturbance in their work when they harvest small portions from the other trees in the *Grand Orchard* (because silly humans are klutzy and they walk around, poking and prodding in things that aren't their business!).

When the bottle fruit became large and sustainable enough, the Bottlings would slip inside with their supplies before the cork could seal the bottle shut. This occurred mostly in the daylight, where humans could watch. From there, they would craft their own little home with what they had gathered and happily dwell within the bottle. Occasionally, the Bottlings would come out of the bottle (they had to prop up a ladder to reach the top and vehemently kick the cork off onto its hinge) and gather more supplies, if they had not started their own garden.

Now, *you*, dear readers, have come upon a time that only occurs every fifteen years in the *Grand Orchard*. This is when the Extravagant Jewel Sprouting happens: an awe-inspiring event in which the Bottle Tree sprouts large glass bottle fruit that have jewels on the tops of the corks.

The bottles themselves would hold intricate structures that a chosen Bottling would inhabit. Typically, these structures would mirror the personality and skills of the Bottling that would live in it. Sometimes, if you're lucky, you can witness a structure-change whenever a chosen Bottling exercises a different skill and the glass bottle will accommodate it.

It was Becky's 15th birthday, a day that she longed for more than any other teenager could. This would be an extra special event for her, as she would *finally* be able to witness her first Extravagant Jewel Sprouting. She woke up that day, with a bright smile on her face. After brushing her teeth and putting on her favorite blue dress, Becky looked at herself in the mirror.

"*Today's the day!*" she thought, as she pulled back her light brown hair into a ponytail with a soft orange ribbon. "*I can't wait to see the Extravagant Jewel Sprouting!!*"

Becky exited her room, set for the day, and went downstairs. She could smell the *delicious* scent of Pancake-Biscuits with homemade strawberry jam that was coming from the kitchen. Her mother, a beautiful woman with green eyes and long brown hair, hummed softly as she stirred the strawberries around in a pot that hung over a fire.

"Good morning, Becky dear~!" her mother sang, when Becky gave her a side-hug. "How's my special birthday girl feeling, hmm?"

"I'm feeling *great*, Ma! I'm excited for the Bottle Tree's Jewel Sprouting," Becky smiled, sweetly. "Where's Papa?"

"Oh, your father's talking to Ms. Hazel. She refused to leave the front step until she spoke to him," Mrs. Jenkins said, with a heavy sigh. "That woman is so nose-y. . . ."

Becky nodded, frowning a bit in thought. The neighbor lady, who lived a good three hours away from them, was too interested in the *Grand Orchard*. She was *very* meddlesome.

While waiting for her father to return, Becky set the table and filled the glasses with water. Her mother brought the warm strawberry jam over and poured a generous amount of it onto each Pancake-Biscuit. After they both sat down, Mr. Jenkins came inside. He kicked his boots off near the front door and entered the dining room.

“Morning, Papa!” Becky beamed, green eyes gleaming with joy.

“Mornin’, m’dear,” Mr. Jenkins smiled. “I hope you’re ready for a fun-filled birthday, Miss Full-Time Apprentice.”

Becky nodded, joy filling her heart. Those five years of tree care training *finally* paid off! Now that she turned fifteen, her father entrusted her with caring for the Bottle Tree. She was ecstatic! After finishing breakfast and cleaning the kitchen, the Jenkins family headed out to the *Grand Orchard* to tend to the trees. Mrs. Jenkins dug small holes around the Tree of Silky Threads and placed her thread scraps in them. Afterwards, she placed an old patchwork quilt around the base of the tree and poured water over it. Mr. Jenkins mixed flour, water, and sugar together, before pouring the goopy combination around the base of the Pancake-Biscuit Tree. He sprinkled some cinnamon over it next to add a bit of a kick to it (cinnamon boosts Pancake-Biscuit productivity, you know).

Becky dragged a large bin of glass shards over to the Bottle Tree. After slipping on her heavy duty gloves, Becky placed a few pieces of glass around the tree’s base. She remembered what her father taught her: clear glass, blue glass, clear glass, green glass. This pattern was *extremely* important when taking care of the Bottle Tree, as it increased the health of the tree by thirty percent. Red glass had to be used in the night, so that it could gather the moonbeams and transfer them deep into the Bottle Tree’s roots.

As Becky placed the correct glass pieces around the tree base, a few Bottlings watched her curiously from the leaves. She looked like a *kind* lady. Very interesting too, as she had something orange in her hair. The Bottlings snickered to each other for a little bit, as they believed she put *Bottle Tree Sap* in her hair.

When it was exactly twelve o'clock, the Jenkins family finished tending to all the trees in the *Grand Orchard*. They then faced the Bottle Tree, watching as the leaves started to change colors. Becky's eyes shone with excitement; this was it! Mr. Jenkins noticed that, this 15th year, the colors of the leaves mirrored actual jewel tones. When he was a boy, the leaves were fiery colors (reds, oranges, and yellows). He remembered what his father told him about the Extravagant Jewel Sproutings *he* viewed. The cork jewels were cooler colors, which corresponded with the colors of the leaves.

Becky noticed five different jewel colors as they began to bud from the leaves. There was Teal, Blue, Citrine, Night Fog Purple, and Saffron (she was *very* knowledgeable in colors and their specific names). The bottles that sprouted underneath the jeweled corks were large, big enough for one person to carry only two in both arms.

"My! Such *beautiful* colors!" Mrs. Jenkins commented, gasping lightly when she saw five Bottlings scurry down the tree branches.

Each Bottling dropped down onto a bottle, peering into the glass structure. As the corks grew fatter, the mouths of the bottles grew wider. Then, the Bottlings slid inside. Small chirps of joy came from them as they waved to each other, excitedly. The corks then closed the bottles off.

"Oh, look at them!" Becky smiled. "They're so tiny. Hi there!"

They were rather peculiar looking characters, Becky decided. Mentally, she referred to them based on the color of the jewel on their cork. There was *Teal*, a Bottling whose red eyes

were sharp and discerning. They contrasted with his white, shaggy hair and lightly-tanned skin. He was in a little black cloak, small yet strong arms hidden from view. Twin swords rested on his back. Next was *Blue*, a Bottling with endearingly wild eyes and messy golden-brown hair. It was clear that this Bottling was a fighter, evident from his strong stature and the tiny sword that rested on his hip.

After him was *Citrine*, a Bottling with bright orange eyes and spiky orange hair. His face was very youthful, eyes filled with naivety. Becky supposed he was the youngest; but she wouldn't underestimate him. A bow and a quiver full of arrows were slung over his shoulders. Then there was *Night* (she decided to call him this, instead of Night Fog Purple all the time). His neatly combed brown hair was a wonderful compliment to his forest green eyes. He looked like a rather ingenuitive Bottling.

The final Bottling, *Saffron*, had ruffled auburn hair and warm brown eyes. He was armed with an iron skillet and a few other cooking utensils. She liked the confidence that radiated from his stance, as he smiled brightly at her through the glass of his bottle.

She approached Citrine's bottle. He waved happily at her, orange eyes alight with joy. A table materialized in front of him, filled with yummy food. Next to him was a stack of history books. He picked up a thick volume and began to read it.

"Well, let's let them get settled," Mr. Jenkins smiled. "I think it's about time to have some *birthday cake*."

After having celebrated Becky's birthday, the family relaxed quietly in the cottage. Becky sat at the dining room table, journaling in her new notebook. She wrote about the Bottle Tree and how

she got to see her very first Jewel Sprouting Event. Her father and mother went back outside, to monitor the Quilt Tree. It looked very *droopy*, unlike last year in the spring.

“We might have to travel to the Patched Plains,” Mrs. Jenkins said, worriedly. “How many yards do you think we’ll need?”

“About fifteen or so. We must strengthen it,” Mr. Jenkins replied. “We should leave tonight.”

“But what about Becky? We can’t leave her alone,” Mrs. Jenkins said.

“She’s fifteen years old, dearest,” Mr. Jenkins said, comfortingly. “Our daughter can govern herself just fine. Besides, when *I* was fifteen, I had to take care of the Bottle Tree by myself. Consider it a tradition of sorts.”

Mrs. Jenkins nodded, with a small sigh. Her dear Becky, growing so fast and maturing so well. The parents went back inside, entering the dining room, so that they could speak to their daughter.

“Becky, m’dear, we have to go to the Patched Plains to get more quilt yards for the Quilt Tree. It looks far too droopy,” Mr. Jenkins explained.

“That means *you* are in charge of holding down the fort, until we come back,” Mrs. Jenkins said.

“Oh. . .I understand,” Becky said. “How long will you guys be gone?”

“Two days, m’dear. But we’ll quicken our step to come back home as fast as possible,” Mr. Jenkins promised.

“It’s okay, Papa,” Becky laughed. “Besides, while I wait, I can spend time with the Bottlings.”

“Speaking of which,” Mr. Jenkins began, “while we’re gone, you must take care of the Bottle Tree on your own.”

“Yes, sir, I will,” Becky promised. “I’ll make sure it’s healthy.”

Mr. Jenkins smiled. “I know you will, m’dear.”

Becky’s parents bade their daughter farewell, before riding away on their horses. Becky waved, watching them disappear into the trees. She then went to the *Grand Orchard*, eager to watch the Bottlings. They all seemed to be having some type of bread for dinner. It was slathered with an orange colored syrup. She supposed that it was Bottle Tree Sap; they looked to be enjoying it. Saffron had a tiny kitchen in his bottle. He had warmed up his orange sap, stirring it around in a pot. A pleased smile rested on his face.

“*Yoo-hoo~!!!*” Becky heard someone call from the front. The girl groaned; it was Ms. Pertinence.

“I’ll be right back,” Becky said to the Bottlings, promisingly, before going inside and looking through the peephole of the front door. “Hi, Ms. Pertinence. Can I help you?”

“I just wanted to check up on you~~~~! I saw your parents leaving the town! Is everything okay? Do you need company? Are your parents going on a long journey? Why did they leave?” Ms. Pertinence asked, rather rudely.

“Everything’s *fine*, Ms. Pertinence, thank you for asking,” Becky said. “I don’t need anything-”

“Wait! I *do* have a question about your precious *Grand Orchard*! I’ve heard so many lovely things about it!” Ms. Pertinence declared. “How do you and your family tend to the Orchard? Is there anything specific? I really *would love* to have the Orchard one day. Is your

father considering selling it? Or is he passing it down to you? Would you sell it to me? *We are* neighbors, you know!”

“*We aren't* giving away our Orchard, Ms. Pertinence. It's been in the family for generations. As always, our answer is no,” Becky said, as politely as one could when bombarded with rude questions from an equally rude neighbor. “I appreciate your earlier concern for my well-being. I'm doing just fine. Have a good evening!”

Becky hurried away from the door, hearing Ms. Pertinence rap on it a few more times and call for her. When all went silent, the teenager cautiously peeked out of the window, sighing in relief when she saw the woman leaving.

“*They don't call her Hazel M. Pertinence for nothing. . . .*” Becky thought, huffing to herself.

The girl went back outside to see the Bottlings again. They were packing up the leftovers of their meal, wrapping the bread expertly in tiny leaf packages and pouring the rest of the tree sap into miniscule jars. Becky smiled, as she watched them work diligently.

A peal of thunder shook Becky out of her pleasant thoughts, as she quickly gazed at the sky. The Bottlings followed suit, worry filling their faces. The sky was growing darker by the second and the wind blew ominously through the trees. The wind chime sound of the Bottle Tree's fruit clinking together and swaying with the branches filled the air.

“*Hmm. . . I'd better get inside. It looks like it's gonna pour,*” Becky thought, before casting a reassuring glance at the Bottlings. “Don't worry, you guys. Your bottles will hold. I'm sure of it!”

The Bottlings smiled back at her, before making small houses materialize inside of their bottles. They were prepared for a long, stormy night. After saying farewell to the Bottlings,

Becky went inside. She warmed some chicken noodle soup over the fire, as well as some bread in the stone oven.

While she ate her dinner, she gazed out of the window. She could see the tiny lights from the Bottlings' houses, gleaming in the dark. Their bottles swayed with the tree branches, as the wind picked up. Another rumble of thunder shook the house. Becky shuddered slightly; this was going to be one stormy night. . . .

Ms. Pertinence angrily paced about in her house. She was upset that she couldn't convince *Becky* to give up the Orchard either.

"It's not fair!" she grumbled to herself. "I could make a *fortune* out of that orchard! Make it an attraction for all to see!"

The nosy woman could imagine herself in front of the *Grand Orchard*, a sign hanging above her head, reading: Hazel M. Pertinence's Eighth Wonder of the World - The Grand Orchard. So many people would come to see her and her magnificent trees. They'd pay her *so* much! The woman angrily grumbled again, as a flash of lightning illuminated the sky. She *detested* the Jenkins' family; why couldn't they just give up the Orchard?!

"I know! I'll ruin it for them. If I kill one of their trees, or damage it at the very least, I could pretend I know how to fix it!" the woman said to herself, deviously. "Then they'd be indebted to me and I could *finally* get my hands on that Orchard!!!"

Grabbing up her trash bin, Ms. Pertinence rummaged through it and retrieved multiple plastic waste from the Kingdom of Plastic Packages. She filled a messenger bag with what she had gathered and made her way out of her house.

“*This should do the trick!*” Ms. Pertinence thought, closing the front door and beginning the long trek *back* to Becky’s house.

Halfway through her journey, the skies released a torrential downpour of cold rain. Ms. Pertinence yelped, indignantly, shuddering at the feeling of freezing water soaking her clothes. She pressed on though, knowing that she’d arrive at the Jenkins’ house soon!

Ms. Pertinence was not as adept as she believed herself to be, though. Once she finally made it to the forest that the Jenkins resided in, she walked into a few trees. She couldn’t see them, especially since it was so dark. A crash of thunder startled her, causing her to trip over the underbrush. She slid down a small hill, falling face first in a puddle of goopy mud.

“Eck!!” she coughed, spitting bits of mud and grass out of her mouth. The wind whistled overhead, rain coming down in buckets. She spluttered, wiping at her eyes, unable to clearly see. After stumbling around for a good thirty minutes, Ms. Pertinence finally came to a clearing in the trees. She tiredly sat on a log for a bit, breathing heavily. The rain let up some, allowing for the full moon to peek through the clouds.

It illuminated the area that she was in, filling her with a bit of glee. She *made* it! She was finally in the *Terrace of Trees!!!!* Ms. Pertinence staggered to her feet, stumbling about the space. She cackled to herself, as she gazed giddily at the various trees. Eventually, her eyes found the Bottle Tree.

“*This must be the greatest tree of them all! I’ll ruin this one!!*” she thought, hauling her wet bag of plastic bottles with her.

As Ms. Pertinence approached the Bottle Tree, another clap of thunder rang through the atmosphere. Rain poured down on the disgruntled woman, as she fished plastic trash out of her

bag. After spreading an egregious amount of plastic around the tree, Ms. Pertinence made her escape into the night!But it was *dark* again and she couldn't see where she was.

She walked into the Tree of Silky Threads and screamed, believing she walked into a giant spider web. She tripped over another log and slipped down a small hill, falling face first into the mud *again*. Battered, bruised, and sopping wet, Ms. Pertinence managed to get back to her house, beginning to feel under the weather.

Becky, who had been soundly sleeping, awoke to the sound of someone screaming. She scrambled to get out of bed and hurried to the window, squinting to see if anyone was out there. She couldn't see any figures, so the teen assumed the sound came from the wind. Becky sighed, shaking her head.

“*Got all worked up for nothing. . . .*” she thought, turning away from the window.

A distinct shattering noise rang through the atmosphere– it also sounded like a wind chime collapsing. Becky could hear *that* loud and clear. It had to be from the Bottle Tree!! She hurried downstairs, sliding her sandals on (poor choice of shoes, really) and throwing on her rain jacket. Flinging the back door open, Becky ran to the Bottle Tree, holding her lantern up to it.

One of the five bottles was *gone*, the saffron-jeweled cork hanging loosely on the tree branch. Before the girl could do much else, the other bottles began to fall. The jeweled corks remained on the branches, as the bottles shattered against the ground. Becky's heart *sank*; why were the bottle fruit dropping? Did she do something to *harm* the Bottle Tree? A small noise, barely heard above the wind, sounded over and over again. It was the keen of a Bottling in *pain*. All of them were making it, most likely hurting from the fall and the loss of their homes.

“No, no, no! How could this happen?” Becky thought, as she set her lantern on the ground. *“I-I did all the right things! I didn’t put red glass in the soil, since it isn’t supposed to go there during a storm!”*

She glanced around for a minute, sheltered somewhat by the Bottle Tree’s leafy branches; what could she put them in? Hurrying back into the house, Becky grabbed the basket used for picking Pancake-Biscuits. It had a soft cloth in there that should be comfortable enough for the Bottlings. Going back outside, Becky gently scooped up each Bottling, brushing away any glass that might have been on them.

“Poor things. I’m so sorry for you,” she said, placing them in the basket.

The Bottlings were still for the most part, eyes squeezed shut. They were wet and cold, filled with sorrow. After Becky had gathered them up, she grabbed her lantern and headed inside.

“What to do, what to do!” Becky thought. *“Okay, first, I’ve gotta get them dried off!”*

She grabbed a small, fuzzy cloth from the linen closet, before hurrying back to the Bottlings. Becky handled each shuddering Bottling with care, drying them off and setting them on a small blanket. Tiny scrapes and bruises littered their faces and arms. Becky chewed at her lip, feeling distressed. Did *she* do something wrong? Why did the bottles fall? She made sure the Bottlings were all cozy in the small blanket, lifting it up and placing it back in the basket. They’d stay there, until morning, she decided. It was the safest place for them right now.

Morning came, with a harrowed Becky rising from her bed. She checked on the Bottlings, who were still fast asleep in the basket, despite the stress they underwent. Then, she went outside to see what happened to the Bottle Tree. Becky would never forgive herself if she had done something to damage it!

There was *plastic* surrounding the base of the tree, which was *odd*. Did the storm blow plastic into the *Grand Orchard*? That couldn't be though, as it was so neatly placed. Becky frowned, before gazing up at the tree branches. The jeweled corks were still there. She gently picked them off. Perhaps the Bottlings would be comforted by seeing some remnant of their home. She cleaned the plastic up and took the corks inside, worry deep in her heart.

The Bottlings were awake, having stacked up on each other to allow Blue to peek over the edge of the basket. When he saw Becky approaching, he looked down, signaling to the others with a few hurried chirps. They unstacked and scrambled back to their cover under the small blanket. Becky smiled sadly.

“It’s okay. You guys can come out. I won’t hurt you,” she said, gently.

One by one, the Bottlings came out from under the blanket. Teal helped the others get back up on the basket’s edge. They all sat on the basket rim, side by side. Becky placed the corks down in a line on the table. Recognition filled the tiny beings’ faces. They scrambled to get down onto the table, hurrying to their designated corks. Confused chirps and worried keens left them, as they communicated with each other. They then looked up at Becky, concerned. What were they going to do *now*, since their bottles were destroyed?

As Becky thought of what to do, her eyes scanned each Bottling. They looked battered and exhausted. Teal looked bruised and his white hair had been dirtied somewhat, while Blue had a painful looking scratch across his nose. Citrine and Saffron looked shaken, while Night looked downtrodden.

“I’ve got it!” she said, a lightbulb going off in her head. “I know how to make glass bottles! Ma taught me all last year! I’ll help you guys.”

Becky got the feeling that, somehow, the Bottlings understood her, as they looked rather pleased with her proposal. Citrine was practically vibrating with joy. Just then, someone knocked on the door. Becky internally groaned.

“Please don’t let it be Ms. Pertinence.” she thought, forlornly.

When the teen looked through the peephole, she noticed the family tree doctor at the front step.

“Dr. Lin? Um, good morning. How are you?” Becky asked, a little surprised.

“I’m doing fine, thank you. Yourself?” he asked, politely.

“Well. . . I’m struggling a bit right now. Something happened to the Bottle Tree and it dropped all of the glass bottles. I have five ‘stranded’ Bottlings inside,” Becky answered.

“Oh no. That sounds awful,” Dr. Lin commented. “Well, I can take a look. It’s time for the Orchard’s monthly checkup anyhow.”

“Well, the tree’s just in shock. You didn’t do anything wrong, since you didn’t put red glass around the tree base,” Dr. Lin concluded.

Becky nodded. Red glass during a storm would do more harm than good. She was thankful for the doctor’s help. He advised her to put yellow glass around the tree base, to calm it down. Then, they both went inside, so that he could give the Bottlings a check-up. The Bottlings had never seen Dr. Lin before, so they immediately went on the defensive. Blue and Teal drew their swords, while Citrine nocked his bow with an arrow. Night and Saffron hurriedly mixed spices together and tied them in little leaf pouches. They would *fling* them at this newcomer if he got too close.

“Mm, they seem aggravated. How long have they been out of their bottles?” Dr. Lin asked, chuckling a bit.

“Ever since last night. I’m going to make some new ones. You know, temporary homes, until the Bottle Tree grows more bottle fruit.” Becky answered, stifling a little chuckle. “This is the tree doctor, Mr. Anthony Lin. He’s my friend, you guys don’t have to be scared.”

Blue and Teal glanced at each other, before lowering their weapons. Citrine, Night, and Saffron put their weapons away as well. The Bottlings allowed Dr. Lin to examine them, while Becky began drawing potential designs for the new glass bottles.

Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins rode back home through the town of Kingdom Rocktree, a thick roll of Patched Plain material in tow. They were glad that the rain had let up, making their journey back easy. As they passed through the town, Ms. Pertinence caught their attention

“Hi~~~!” she called, before coughing hoarsely. “I saw that you left, so I decided to check on your daughter for you! Why did you leave? Did you get anything new? Is it something for your Orchard? I hope the storm didn’t damage it!”

Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins shared a look with each other, before glancing at Ms. Pertinence. “Everything’s fine. Thank you for your concern.” Mr. Jenkins said, before he and his wife left.

“She looked sick.” Mrs. Jenkins commented, trying to hide a smile.

Mr. Jenkins just rolled his eyes. “Probably meddled with something during the storm.”

When Becky’s parents returned home, Dr. Lin was leaving. They politely greeted each other, which prompted the doctor to explain what had happened to the Bottle Tree. Mr. Jenkins sighed.

“Why do I get the feeling that woman was behind this?” he asked his wife, to which she shook her head.

Becky greeted her parents warmly, with a tinge of sadness in her eyes. “I failed to protect the Bottle Tree, Papa. I’m sorry.”

Mr. Jenkins chuckled. “When I was a lad, something similar occurred. Things happen in nature that we can’t control. Besides, you protected the Bottlings, didn’t you?”

“Yes, sir.” Becky answered. “I’m going to make temporary bottles for them, until new ones grow in.”

As if on cue, the Bottlings peeked out from behind the basket. Mrs. Jenkins gasped and Mr. Jenkins laughed. They’d have to grow used to living with the little helpers for a while then.