



# The Multilingual Library for Children in Europe

**Belgian Modern Story**  
English language version



Co-funded by the  
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of the European Union

“Fairy tales are more than true:  
not because they tell us that dragons exist,  
but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.”

Neil Gaiman



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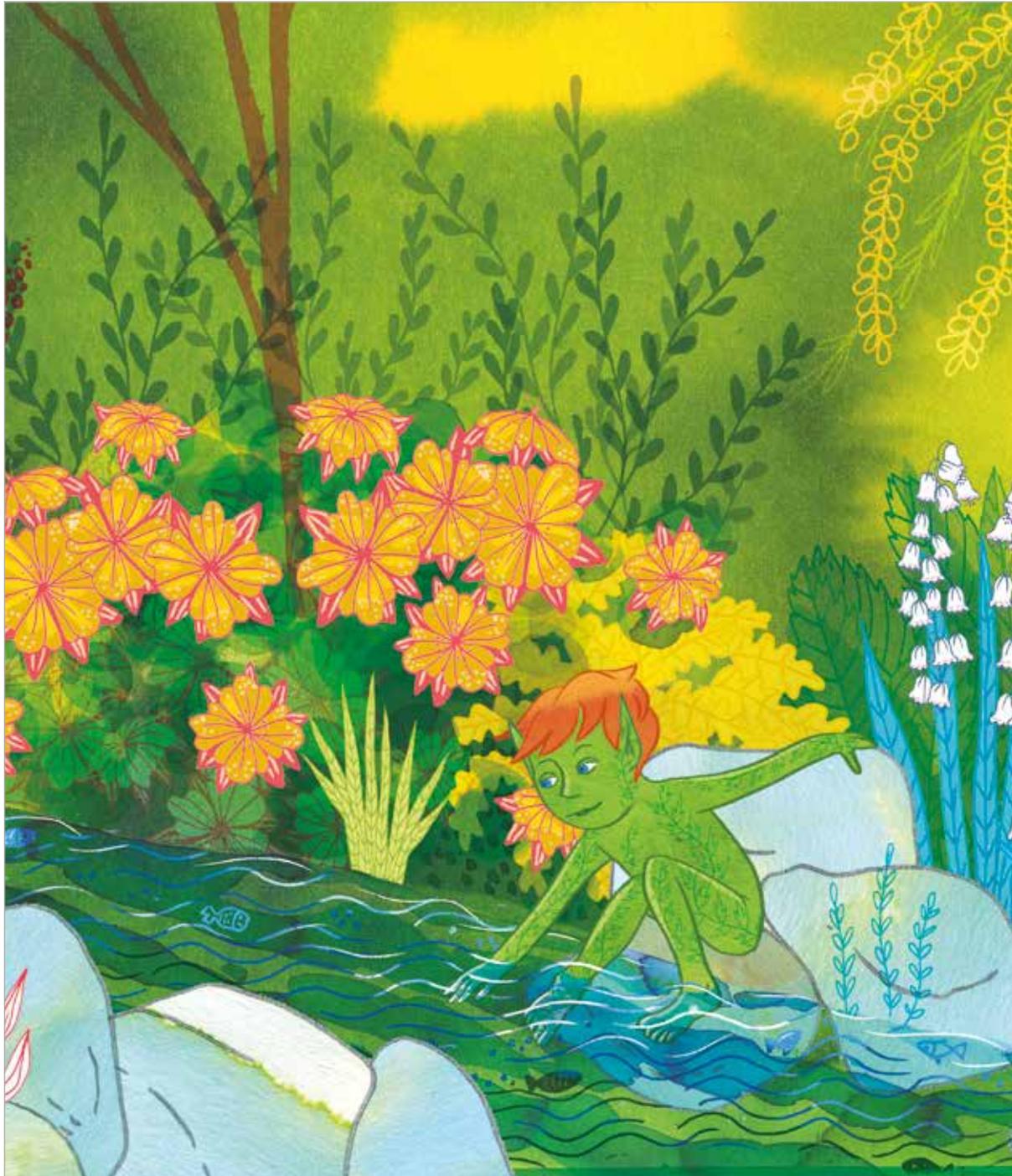
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# WHY THE COLOUR GREEN IS GREEN

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*Author: Marianne Poncelet*

*Illustrator: Amélie Clément*



A little boy asks himself repeatedly while dozing in his white bed:

“Why is the colour green green?”

Little boy, let me tell you this story ...

At the beginning of the world, the colour green did not exist. Everything was blue. The Earth was then even called “the blue planet”. The blue of the sky melted into the blue of the sea, like an infinite number of reflections in the mirror.

But one day, the Sun let loose his yellow arrows a little harder than usual and thousands of darts penetrated the ocean.



The waves crashed on the blond sand. The golden rays mixed with the bluish water, on ochre sand that glittered as if on fire. This fusion lasted a long time.

Then something strange happened. On the shore, a green spot appeared. The first green spot in the world. It grew and grew and gradually covered the sandbanks like lava from a volcano.

A colour appearing out of nowhere had thus imposed itself on the universe. Neither quite blue, nor quite yellow, just in between: the colour green.

But suddenly, in the middle of this green tide, a shell appears. From the shell, a little head emerges: an elf, born from the love of the sea and the sun, jumps on his feet, rubs his eyes and tilts his head with wonder. In front of him, as far as the eye could see: the Sea! He turns around with a jump, and behind him, as far as the eye can see: the Earth!

“How beautiful!” he shouts, clapping his hands. “Let’s take a closer look!”



And the elf, wading in the greenish water, rushes forth with a quick step. He leaps over the dunes and then starts climbing up the mountain. While clinging to the rocks, he is surprised to see that when he touches a stone, it turns green.

Astonished, he looks at his hands. They are both green, as is his entire body.

“But why did the grey rock suddenly turn green?”

The elf bravely starts climbing again towards the top of the mountain. Once there, he discovers an old dry tree.

“Poor tree, it doesn’t seem to be in good shape,” says the little elf to himself while caressing the rough branches.



Instantly, the branches are covered with a soft green hue. Small buds appear, followed by leaves and form a Spring foliage.

The elf, still astonished, looks at his hands and bursts out laughing.

“Guess what! You look much more beautiful like this!”, he says to the tree, which straightens itself proudly.

The little elf continues on his way. Everything he touches turns green. It amuses him a lot, but he is careful not to touch everything because the other colours also please him. Soon, wherever on Earth the little elf passes, green spots appear. Later on, these would be called fields or meadows. On the hills, the black trees are covered with a dazzling green, and fresh grass shoots up in joyous clumps in the depths of the valleys.



One day, he arrives at the banks of a clear stream. Forgetting the power of his hands, he jumps into the water and romps around joyfully. The stream immediately turns green and flows towards a forest nearby. The forest, whose roots plunge deep beneath the ground and drink the water from the streams, gradually becomes lighter. This time, it is the entire black forest that turns green!

“How beautiful!” shouts the little elf while laughing.

At nightfall, he lies down at the edge of the forest and falls asleep.

The next morning, he stretches himself lazily and then starts dancing in the light. His laughter is like a cascade of pure water and echoes like infinite green waves. These touch the buds of trees and plants which then explode in a myriad of colours.



And that is how the very first Spring appeared in the world.

The little elf is lighthearted. Day and night, he watches over the balance of all the colours of the planet. He is worshipped everywhere and people follow his trail. His footsteps resemble tiny green islands.

And then one day, the long trail of islands ended at the edge of a cliff. Below, the waves broke on a beach where a thousand shells rest. But there was no trace of the little green elf...

On the horizon, a green rainbow tore through the sky. The little elf had flown away on the most beautiful of journeys.

Since then, in good weather, when the Sun ends its course, one can glimpse a green ray...

It is the soul of the little elf who salutes the Earth as a sign of hope.





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