

The Garden of Live Flowers

by Lewis Carroll *from* Through the Looking-Glass

This passage is from Through the Looking-Glass, which is a sequel to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. As the passage begins, Alice has gone through a looking-glass, or mirror, into another wonderland. She is in a garden where she has discovered flowers that can talk.

Alice didn't like being criticized, so she began asking questions. "Aren't you sometimes frightened at being planted out here, with nobody to take care of you?"

"There's the tree in the middle," said the Rose: "what else is it good for?"

"But what could it do, if any danger came?" Alice asked.

"It says 'Bough-wough!'" cried a Daisy: "that's why its branches are called boughs!"

"Didn't you know THAT?" cried another Daisy, and here they all began shouting together, till the air seemed quite full of little shrill voices. "Silence, every one of you!" cried the Tiger-lily, waving itself passionately from side to side, and trembling with excitement. "They know I can't get at them!" it panted, bending its quivering head towards Alice, "or they wouldn't dare to do it!"

"Never mind!" Alice said in a soothing tone, and stooping down to the daisies, who were just beginning again, she whispered, "If you don't hold your tongues, I'll pick you!"

There was silence in a moment, and several of the pink daisies turned white.

"That's right!" said the Tiger-lily. "The daisies are worst of all. When one speaks, they all begin together, and it's enough to make one wither to hear the way they go on!"

"How is it you can all talk so nicely?" Alice said, hoping to get it into a better temper by a compliment. "I've been in many gardens before, but none of the flowers could talk."

"Put your hand down, and feel the ground," said the Tiger-lily. "Then you'll know why."
Alice did so. "It's very hard," she said, "but I don't see what that has to do with it."

"In most gardens," the Tiger-lily said, "they make the beds too soft—so that the flowers are always asleep."

This sounded a very good reason, and Alice was quite pleased to know it. "I never thought of that before!" she said.

“It’s MY opinion that you never think AT ALL,” the Rose said in a rather severe tone.

“I never saw anybody that looked stupider,” a Violet said, so suddenly, that Alice quite jumped; for it hadn’t spoken before.

“Hold YOUR tongue!” cried the Tiger-lily. “As if YOU ever saw anybody! You keep your head under the leaves, and snore away there, till you know no more what’s going on in the world, than if you were a bud!”

“Are there any more people in the garden besides me?” Alice said, not choosing to notice the Rose’s last remark.

“There’s one other flower in the garden that can move about like you,” said the Rose. “I wonder how you do it—” (“You’re always wondering,” said the Tiger-lily), “but she’s more bushy than you are.”

“Is she like me?” Alice asked eagerly, for the thought crossed her mind, “There’s another little girl in the garden, somewhere!”

“Well, she has the same awkward shape as you,” the Rose said, “but she’s redder—and her petals are shorter, I think.”

“Her petals are done up close, almost like a dahlia,” the Tiger-lily interrupted: “not tumbled about anyhow, like yours.”

“But that’s not YOUR fault,” the Rose added kindly: “you’re beginning to fade, you know—and then one can’t help one’s petals getting a little untidy.”

Alice didn’t like this idea at all: so, to change the subject, she asked “Does she ever come out here?”

“I daresay you’ll see her soon,” said the Rose. “She’s one of the thorny kind.”

Questions

1. Who protects the flowers?
2. Why did some of the daisies turn white?
3. Why could these flowers talk, and flowers in other gardens can't talk?
4. What do the flowers mean when they talk about Alice's petals?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. shrill
2. quivering
3. soothing
4. wither
5. severe

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) "they all began shouting together, till the air seemed quite full of little **shrill** voices"

a. small or tiny b. soft; gentle c. high; screeching d. chirping; bird-like

2) "it panted, bending its **quivering** head towards Alice"

a. shaking; shivering b. colorful or bright c. shining; glistening d. laughing or giggling

3) "Never mind!" Alice said in a **soothing** tone"

a. mean or hateful b. yelling; screaming c. commanding d. comforting or calming

4) "it's enough to make one **wither** to hear the way they go on"

a. sad or unhappy b. droop or fade c. angry or mad d. run away; escape

5) "'It's MY opinion that you never think AT ALL,' the Rose said in a rather **severe** tone."

a. careful; cautious b. teasing or joking c. casual or easy d. serious; strict