**The tulip bed.**

*Retold by Lucie Coleman and Keira Pope*

Once upon a time, there was a good old woman who lived in a tiny house. She had in her garden a bed of beautiful striped tulips.

One night she was awakened by the sounds of sweet singing and babies laughing. She looked out at the window. The sounds seemed to come from the tulip bed, but she could see nothing.

The next morning she walked among her flowers, but there were no signs of any one having been there the night before.

Now in those days there were little folk or fairies, as the people called them living in that part of the country, and one of their favourite places was a field just beyond the old woman’s garden. They liked this field because it was never visited by strangers, here they could play undisturbed, dancing in the moonlight. But one thing they found troublesome; On warm nights, when the moon was bright, they could not get their children to sleep. The small fairies would fidget and cry in their cots until their mothers grew almost frantic, fearing they would never be able to go and dance but they would have to sit up all night and sing them to sleep.

Then one fairy mother hit upon a new and clever plan. One evening she carried her small baby across the field and into the cottage garden. Although the old woman was out in the garden bringing the last of her clothes from the line, she did not see the fairy and her baby, for, of course, they were invisible to human eyes. The fairy flew with the baby over the tulip bed, and gently put it inside a yellow tulip. She hovered overhead, sang a little sleepy song, and as the tulip rocked in the evening breeze, the baby very soon fell fast asleep. The fairy mother flew home, changed quickly into her ball dress Thistledown and Gossamer, and was the first to appear at the ball. Some unfortunate ones were not able to come till it was nearly over, because the night was very warm and their children more than usually tiresome.

Next night all the mothers of babies took their children to the tulip bed and did as the first fairy had done. They chose tulips of their favourite colour and lay their children inside them. Soon soft lullabies sounded from all over the bed, and before long all the dozens of fairy babies were fast asleep swaying in their flowers. From this time on, the tulips grew even larger and straighter; their colours were richer and more delicate; what is more, the fairies even gave them a sweet smell, which is a thing no ordinary tulip has.

The end*.*