

# The Good Fairy Statue

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I was first introduced to the Good Fairy Statue at Camp Hantesa, a Camp Fire camp on the Des Moines River near Boone, Iowa, probably in the summer of 1958. On Sunday all the campers would walk through the woods up to a spot called Magic Hill, overlooking the river valley, for evening vesper services. Each person was given a candle and the flame was passed around to everyone. Campers and staff looked through the flame at a statue of a white painted Good Fairy, placed on a shelf on a tree, and made a wish before blowing out the candle. I participated in this ritual for seven years as a camper, three years as an apprentice and two years as a counselor. Someone always read this poem by L. Robinson:



## Message of the Good Fairy

I spring from the spray on the tip of the crest  
Of the billows from out of the blue,  
I am bringing a message that says you are blest  
By the love that your friends bear for you.

If my arms were as long as the wings of the wind  
And I'd stretch them wide away,  
I never could hold all the blessings I'm told  
Your friends are wishing today.

As long as I stand with this smile on my face  
And my arms outstretched so high,  
If you'll think of the friend that sent me to you,  
You can never be blue if you try.



## L.M. Montgomery

When I started reading L.M. Montgomery's journals (author of *Anne of Green Gables*, 1908), I recognized the Good Fairy statue in a photo of a room in her home. Montgomery's closest friend and cousin, Frederica (Frede) Campbell MacFarlane (who died in the influenza pandemic in 1919), owned the Good Fairy – it was passed on to Montgomery after Frede's death.

I also brought home her "Good Fairy." That morning in May when I arrived at the Teacher's Residence Frede took me up to her room and delightedly showed me her "first wedding present" – a pretty little bronze statuette called "The Good Fairy" which had been given her by two of the staff. ... She always kept it on her bureau. I shall put it somewhere where I shall see it often and perhaps in days to come it will give me pleasure and not pain."  
[*Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, 2:300]

A photo of Frede's Good Fairy, in its place at the Leaskdale Manse, is shown on page 159 of Volume 3 of the *Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*. It was also in her Norval home and was broken and/or disappeared in later years. I imagine the Good Fairy was created out of a reaction to the horror of World War 1. The poetry and purpose of its creation seems to fit perfectly into what L.M. Montgomery hungered for - something to uplift her soul. It is both male and female in true fairy tradition. When viewed from the front and from the right side, it is a girl and when viewed from the left side it is a boy.

## Jessie McCutcheon Raleigh Nelson

I have collected some information about the statue from its descriptions by auction sellers. In general, the original statue was about 12" high, although smaller ones were made too. It is described as art nouveau or deco in style, sometimes made of gilded spelter (pot metal) and also made by the Armour Bronze Co. Most statues have a copyright symbol and J.M.R. 1916 engraved in the base -- it was manufactured (but not sculpted) by Jessie McCutcheon Raleigh Nelson of Chicago. A brochure, printed in 1915 that came with the statue, has several photographs and it appears that the originals were painted white. The Good Fairy was made into lamps, finials, trophies, and Pompeian Bronze bookends. The manufacturers of Fairy Soap gave the statue away as a premium if customers sent in wrappers and labels. McCutcheon wrote the foreword to a book called *The Good Fairy* by Grace Bliss Stewart published in 1930 – Stewart dedicated the book to Jessie. Many undamaged 12" statues sell in the \$250-\$700 range.



From a Good Fairy brochure:

Jessie McCutcheon Raleigh, a doll designer, had the inspiration for the statue, and commissioned a sculptor, Miss Josephine Kern to fashion the model. Many statues were produced and many owners were delighted with their uplifting effect. Most of the statuettes are titled The Good Fairy and marked 1916 J.M.R. on the base. ... Mrs. Raleigh is the sister of George Barr McCutcheon, the novelist, John T. McCutcheon, the cartoonist, and Ben F. McCutcheon, author and journalist. She is a clever woman of wide interests and charm, as well as a practical idealist. She felt that the world was tired of mascots and grotesque good luck statuettes and novelties that filled the shops. She felt there was place and need for some lovely object that would appeal to the longing for the beautiful in every breast, that would embody joy and freedom and youthful ideals, and yet would satisfy our little superstitions about things that bring us good fortune.



From the February 1988 issue of *Doll Reader*:

In 1916, Jessie McCutcheon Raleigh (doll maker in Chicago) ventured into the business world and acquired international fame from her development of this statue. Mrs. Raleigh explains the reasons for this statuette by saying, "It symbolized friendliness, brotherhood and good luck. A good fairy that shall be grace and innocence and sunshine that shall smile back in to the sad hearts of the old world that shall spur people on to their best and in that way bring them good luck." Its popularity grew tremendously and hundreds of "Good Fairy" clubs were formed all over the world. Many famous people were enthralled with this little figure and Mrs. Raleigh's studio in Chicago was lined with pictures of all kinds and classes of men and women, rich and poor, who had been photographed with their own "Good Fairy" statuette. Judge Ben Lindsey wrote that he kept one of the figures on his bench beside him in juvenile court in Denver. He stated that the eyes of the "Good Fairy" were on a level with the eyes of the boys who appeared before him. Her hands reached out to them in friendliness. This judge further stated that it was not possible to estimate the good that the statuette had done. Helen Keller wrote that the statuette was a smiling and lovely flower and that she could not put into words "what message of joy" it spoke to her fingers. "I feel its smile like a sunbeam in my darkness," she said.

### Josephine Kern (Mrs James Mapes Dodge)

Josephine Kern is rarely mentioned as the sculptor of the Good Fairy and I only found one reference to her in Good Fairy related material. Her husband was a successful mechanical engineer and inventor and he was connected to the mining industry. His mother, Mary Mapes Dodge, was the author of *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates* and editor of *St. Nicholas* magazine. Princeton University holds a collection of Dodge family papers. Mary Mapes Dodge corresponded and worked with many famous people of her time: Louisa May Alcott, Frances Hodgson Burnett,



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Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Rudyard Kipling, Theodore Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Kate Douglas Wiggin.

### Kern sculptures



\* "Hercules Archer" 1920s bronze sculpture on marble base signed and with foundry marks for Gorham Foundry

\* 1928 cast bronze, stone base statue in Ottawa Park, University of Toledo, Ohio of Sylvanus Pierre Jermain, an early business and political leader, and avid golfer, created many of Toledo's public green spaces.



\* The Rickenbacker Trophy: bronze, 31 " high designed by Miss Josephine Kern is the trophy presented by Capt. E.V. Rickenbacker (The American Ace) for the light aeroplane contest held at the close of the International Aviation Meet at Dayton, [Ohio] October 6, 1924.

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### BE A CHILD AT HEART by Jessie McCutcheon Raleigh 1915

Not so long ago, in your childish imaginings, the Good Fairy reigned above all fanciful spirits. It always appeared just in time to smooth out human complexities. It guarded the worthy and rewarded them with happiness.

Is there not enough of the child left in you to call back to your hearts this lovely spirit from the World of Fancy? Can't you believe that the uplifting buoyancy of a young heart can be a constant inspiration to you? Can't you absorb from this Good Fairy's confident attitude toward the world, a radiancy of thought which will make Life beautiful – carrying you back to the belief that if you are good the Fairy will listen to your wishes and bring them true?

In these days, when the world seems a huge machine that is wound up like a clock, all of you are sensible of the danger of losing hold of your better selves. Why not "slow down" a moment now and then? Let the wholesome faith and disarming innocence of childhood beckon to your dormant hopes, build up your shattered dreams, and restore your faded illusions.

Here is a Good Fairy of a thousand meanings, eager to be the harbinger of all good things to you - watching tenderly over your lives, your homes, and the land in which you live. Let it fill your souls with the love and charity which make for true greatness. BE A CHILD AT HEART.

