



'A Woodland Clearing' by Garnet Ruskin Wolseley

ONE MAGICAL AUTUMN

One early and dewy Autumnal morning an old man stopped at his destination, which was not too far from his cottage, where his daughter's family were visiting him later that morning. He leant heavily on his ebony walking stick, whilst standing in a small woodland clearing; his tired body happily breathing in the musty and earthy air. He could smell the damp leaves of orange and gold, which had fallen from the tall trees surrounding the little oasis. Looking around, he then stepped a few feet towards where a sought-after mushroom ring was growing.

The weary old man pulled his red scarf closely about his thin neck; then bending down, he carefully placed his own lovingly hand-carved wooden pixie alongside the largest mushroom of the ring. He also took a red ribbon from his pocket and tied it expertly around the stem, creating a flourishing bow, and thought how his two grandchildren will marvel at such a magical sight, as he had promised to take them mushroom picking today.

Whilst trying to stand back up with the help of his trusty walking stick, the old man became very dizzy and fell gently to the ground, cushioned by the carpet of golden leaves. As he lay on his side unconscious, a sparkling drop of dew fell silently from the red-bowed mushroom onto the head of the wooden pixie. At the exact moment when the droplet reached the pixie's hollowed out eyes, the old man awoke, seeing what he believed was a magical miracle, but he didn't like to see the tearful pixie being so sad and softly whispered.

"Don't weep for me little one. My last Autumn has finally come and my body will never suffer another cold bitter winter. Be good friends little fellow to my lovely grandchildren – Betsy and Henry."

The old man's eyes closed forever, but his lips still smiled. The trees and woodland creatures, magical and real, sadly witnessed the passing of a good and long-lived life, that no returning Spring could ever retrieve.

The pixie wiped away his tears with the end of a red ribbon.

350 words (not including the title)