

🌲 Fairy Outpost: Cottonwood Grove

The Guardians of the Land

(Magic Word: Guard)

✧ Chapter One — The Fairy Origins



I am **Eldewyn**, and this is the story of the **Cottonwood Guardians**, protectors of trees and keepers of time.

Long ago, before people gave names to the lakes and rivers, the Cottonwood Fairies lived in the endless northern forests. They were taller than most fairies, their wings wide and feathery, their laughter deep as thunder. Each summer, they sent their soft white seeds drifting through the air — tiny parachutes carrying life to every corner of the land.

They wandered for centuries, carried on winds and dreams, until they reached this place. The

cottonwoods here stood proud and straight, their leaves shimmering like coins in the sunlight, whispering to one another even when the air was still. The fairies made their homes in the hollows of those great trunks, and this grove became their fortress — a living cathedral built by time.

Every year, when the air fills with drifting cotton that looks like snow in summer, it is their way of saying: *We are still here. We still guard this land.*

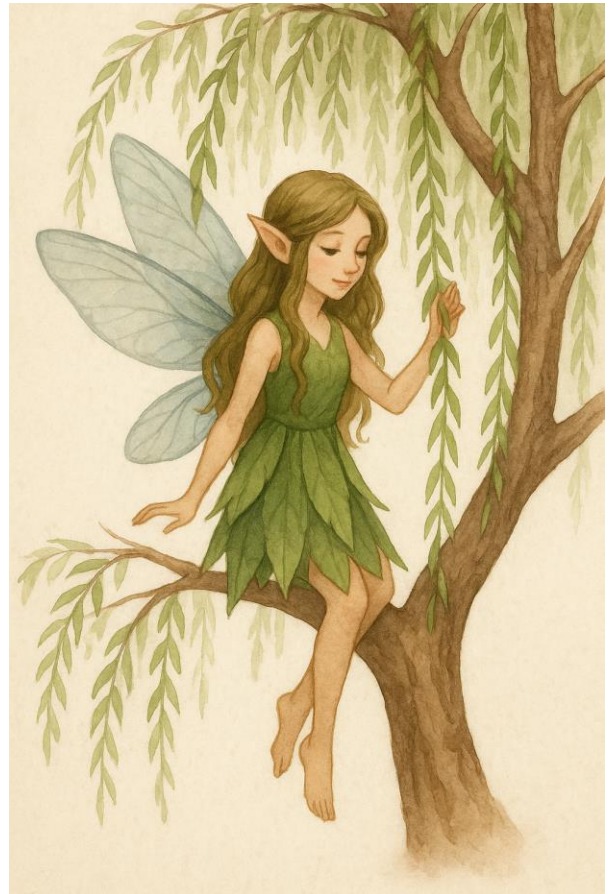
✧ Chapter Two — From Our Homeland

(Told by Eldewyn, High Guardian of the Fairies)

Before we move forward, let us look backward to the frozen forests of the **Cottonwood Guardians**, the keepers of strength and memory.

Their homeland lay far to the north, in places where the ground stayed cold half the year and snow shone like powdered diamonds. There the trees stood tall and silent, each one older than any fairy could remember. Their trunks were thick with time, their bark carved with the marks of wind, weather, and wisdom.

The Cottonwood Fairies lived in the hollows of these trees, their homes warmed by the faint glow of glowing lichen and small embers of pine sap that burned without smoke. Their floors were carpeted with moss, and their tables were made of smooth acorn shells polished by beetles. They slept in beds of owl feathers and pine needles, and in the evenings they sat around candle-moss fires, telling stories that lasted for hours.



Their favorite food was the sap of the cottonwood itself—sweet as syrup and warm with sunlight—and in winter they drank snowmelt collected in curled leaves.

When darkness fell, the forests came alive with song. Wolves howled in the distance, and the fairies sang back to them in voices so high that humans could only hear the echo. The Guardians' music was deep and slow, like wind through trees.

But even the oldest forests can change. Ice crept south, freezing rivers and snapping boughs. Then, centuries later, the ice retreated, and the land softened. The fairies followed the melting edges of the glaciers, walking beside streams newly born from the thaw. They carried with them seeds from the oldest trees, promising to plant them wherever they found new soil strong enough to hold them.

When they reached this valley, they saw tall cottonwoods shimmering like silver coins in the breeze. The fairies planted their ancestral seeds here, and the trees took root, growing strong and wise once again. **Cottonwood Grove** became their new stronghold—a living library of leaves, each one whispering a story of endurance.

✧ Chapter Three — The Story of the Land

Long before any fairy or human came, this land lay under an ocean of ice — a glacier thicker than mountains. Slowly, over thousands of years, it scraped and carved the earth, leaving behind rolling hills, deep basins, and the hundreds of glittering lakes we know today as **Lake Country**.

When the ice finally melted, it left behind soil rich and dark, perfect for trees and crops alike. Cottonwoods rooted first, followed by oaks,

maples, and birches. The land healed itself, turning from cold silence to green song.

Centuries later, humans came with axes and saws. They cleared fields for farming and built cabins and barns from the forest's gifts. **Nearly 200 years ago**, settlers like **Asa Clark** used the water of Pewaukee Lake to power mills and saws, turning trees into the boards that built their new homes.

But even as forests fell, the tall cottonwoods at the edges of fields were spared. They gave shade, marked boundaries, and watched over the prairie farms. To the fairies, these were the chosen ones — the **sentinels of change**.

By the late 1800s, the lakes formed by the glaciers had become famous for their beauty. Families from Milwaukee and Chicago came here for summer retreats, boating on Pewaukee and Oconomowoc Lakes, resting beneath the cool shelter of the same cottonwoods that have stood for generations.

✧ Chapter Four — The Guardian's Promise

The Cottonwood Fairies are patient watchers. They have seen centuries pass — storms, droughts, settlers, and cities — yet still they stand. Their roots hold the soil when floods rise, and their branches shelter owls, raccoons, and countless songbirds.

But the Guardians know this truth: even the strongest tree cannot protect itself forever. New saplings must be planted, old giants must be honored, and fallen branches must return to the soil to give life again.

So, traveler, as you rest beneath their leaves, Eldewyn asks:

Will you honor the trees?

Will you plant, protect, and cherish them, so new guardians may rise to watch over this land?

If you will, then follow the winding trail toward the wetlands beyond. There, in the quiet chorus of frogs and reeds, waits the final fairy outpost — the Marsh that Protects. ✨