

## A Jingle of Justice Excerpt

“I LOVE BELLS,” I SAID to Joss, my stalwart sales clerk at Open Your Imagination. Today had been our day off at the fairy garden shop, and we’d set out the array of gift items I’d ordered—strands of bells, necklaces with bells, and freestanding bells. “Tomorrow’s customers are going to be so excited.”

Outside, the sky had turned dark. Inside the shop half of the lights were switched on. I didn’t want anyone to think we were open.

“During the holidays, everyone enjoys a jingle here and there,” I said, lifting a windchime of copper bells. The gentle tinkling sound was enchanting.

“These porcelain ones are amazing, Courtney.” Joss raised a bell I’d commissioned from an Etsy designer. Each bell featured beautiful flower fairies. Each fairy depicted a different flower, like poppy, rose, jasmine, or tulip.

“I agree. Gorgeous. They stand out well against the green velvet drape.”

We had adorned the main showroom with sprigs of holly and fairy lights and snow globes. The patio, where we displayed all the miniature fairy figurines and environmental pieces customers could purchase to construct their own gardens, was similarly decked out. The window boxes in front of the shop were planted with cyclamen and decorated with miniature ornaments.

I said, “You know, online I learned ringing bells in your garden fills it with the energy of magical bloom guardians.”

Fiona, a righteous fairy, flew into the shop from the patio. Everyone in town had heard by now that I could see fairies. In Carmel, which was a magical and mystical sort of place, most people didn’t make fun. They were fairy-curious, you might say.

“I know a few bloom guardians,” Fiona said. All three inches of her hovered above us, her gossamer wings flapping a mile a minute.

“You do?” My eyes went wide. “Are they like nurturer fairies?”

“Bloom guardians protect flora and fauna, but they are not fairies. They are—” She did a loop-the-loop and came to rest on the arch of a shepherd’s hook. The windchimes hanging from the hook dinged. “How can I explain it? They’re deities from another realm.”

“Heavens, there’s another realm?” I exchanged a look with Joss.