

The Magical Staircase

By Lia Welch

Once upon a time there lived two sisters named Hope and Faith who lived with their mother and step-sister, Ella. Their mother adored her stepdaughter Ella and despised her two other daughters because they had nothing in common with her. Faith and Hope were always joyful and loved to go on adventures and explore together. They would wake up, eat breakfast and leave to explore the woods, meadows and fields. They often would pack a lunch and not come back home until the sun went down. Unlike Hope and Faith, their mother and stepsister strongly disliked leaving their house and were not curious about the world outside.

As Hope and Faith grew a little bit older, their mother demanded them to be more serving in the household. Their mother made them serve her and Ella breakfast, lunch and dinner everyday and they were not allowed to eat themselves until their chores were completed. Aside from preparing all the meals, they had to do all the laundry, scrub the kitchen floor after every meals, feed the cat and clean the bedrooms. They were only allowed outside their house once a week for one hour.

One night after Faith and Hope had gone to sleep, a golden staircase appeared in the middle of their room. They awoke at midnight by the glowing staircase leading down to an enchanted forest. Hope was skeptical about the staircase when she first glanced at it, but Faith became very curious and wanted to figure out where the staircase led. Hope then followed Faith into the staircase. When they entered the forest, a tingling feeling went down their spines as they saw fairies of all different colors fly by, horses and unicorns eating the grass in the sunlight and fish jumping in and out of the lake. Hope and Faith immediately started exploring the forest to find what was in it. They were running, jumping and dancing in joy to see the next magnificent thing this forest held. They played with the birds, roamed the horses and danced under a sparkling pavilion which played the most extravagant music. The two sisters then came across a tall young lady dressed in a long sparkling pink dress with a tiara on top of her very curly brown hair. The young lady noticed the two sisters staring at her and asked, "Who might you be?" Hope then answered her saying, "I am Hope and this is my sister Faith. We came to this enchanted forest through a staircase in our bedroom." The young lady then responded, "Ah, You must be tonight's visitors. It is quite nice to meet you. My name is Enchase and I am the keeper of this forest."

Enchase continued talking to the sisters, particularly what their world was like. Hope and Faith then asked Enchase more about the forest and what she meant when she said they were tonight's visitors. Enchase answered them by saying, "Every night at midnight the golden staircase appears in the same room as someone who is in despair. This forest is to restore what was taken away from them. For you two, it is adventure. Everyday I transform this forest to fill joy into those who are expected to arrive. The staircase only appears to someone once. But when the clock strikes 3:00, it is time to return from where you came." Faith and Hope savored the last few moments in the enchanted forest then went back to the magical staircase to return home.

The next morning as they served their mother and Ella breakfast, they explained how amazing the enchanted forest and Enchase was. Their mother then decided to move Faith and Hope into the attic and lock their old bedroom door, thinking it would prevent them from ever finding a way back to the enchanted forest. She also doubled their chores and took away their one hour outside the house.

That following night Faith and Hope were exhausted from a long day of laboring for their mother and stepsister. They were also crushed that they could no longer explore the world or have their afternoon picnics in the meadows and so they cried themselves to sleep. Once again they awoke at midnight, but this time it was from a small fairy. The fairy excitedly whispered to them saying, "Follow me!" so they did what she asked and followed her to their old bedroom. Faith and Hope were confused as to why the fairy lead them to a room that was locked until the fairy waved her hand and shimmering pink dust flew through the keyhole unlocking the door.

When they walked in, Faith and Hope saw the golden staircase once again and followed the fairy down into the enchanted forest. When they arrived Enchase greeted them saying, "Welcome back! As I told you no one visits here more than once—but as I thought about it more, I do need some help maintaining this forest. Would you two do me the honor of living here in the enchanted forest with me?" Faith and Hope looked at each other and in unison said, "Yes, we would absolutely love to!"

Faith and Hope then helped Enchase prepare for the next visitors to come. They were always in charge of greeting the visitors and showing them around the enchanted forest and all the amazing creatures and animals that lived within it.