

Corgi Fantasy

by Anne G. Biddlecombe

Would you know where Corgis came from?
How they came to live with mortals?

Hearken to the ancient legend,
Hearken to the story-teller.

On the mountains of the Welsh-land
In its green and pleasant valleys,
Lived the peasant folk of old times,
Lived our fathers and grandfathers;
And they toiled and laboured greatly
With their cattle and their ploughing,
That their women might have plenty.
And their children journeyed daily
With the kine upon the mountain,
Seeing that they did not wander,
Did not come to any mischief,
While their fathers ploughed the valley
And their mothers made the cheeses.

'Til one day they found two puppies
Found them playing in a hollow,
Playing like a pair of fox-cubs.
Burnished gold their coat and colour,
Shining like a piece of satin —
Short and straight and thick their forelegs
And their heads were like a fox's
But their eyes were kind and gentle;
Long of body were these dwarf dogs
And without a tail behind them.

Now the children stayed all day there,
And they learned to love the dwarf-dogs,
Shared their bread and water with them,
Took them home with them at even.
Made a cosy basket for them,
Made them welcome in the kitchen
Made them welcome in the homestead.

When the men came home at sunset
Saw them lying in the basket,
Heard the tale the children told them,

How they found them on the mountain
Found them playing in the hollow —
They were filled with joy and wonder
Said it was a fairy present,
Was a present from the wee folk,
For their fathers told a legend
How the fairies kept some dwarf dogs.
Called them Corgis — Fairy heelers:
Made them work the fairy cattle,
Made them pull the fairy coaches,
Made them steeds for fairy riders,
Made them fairy children's playmates;
Kept them hidden in the mountains,
Kept them in the mountains' shadow
Lest the eye of mortal see one.

Now the Corgis grew and prospered,
And the fairies' life was in them,
In the lightness of their movement,
In the quickness of their turning,
In their badness and their goodness.
And they learnt to work for mortals,
Learnt to love their mortal masters
Learnt to work their masters' cattle,
Learnt to play with mortal children.

Now in every vale and hamlet,
In the valleys and the mountains,
From the little town of Tenby,
By the Port of Milford Haven,
To St. David's Head and Fishguard,
In the valley of the Cleddau,
On the mountains of Preselly,
Lives the Pembrokeshire Welsh Corgi,
Lives the Corgi with his master.

Should you doubt this ancient story,
Laugh and scoff and call it nonsense,
Look and see the saddle markings
Where the fairy warriors rode them
(As they ride them still at midnight,
On Midsummer's Eve at midnight,
When we mortals all are sleeping).

