



Author's Notes



On reading "Fairy Oak" some have said that it's a book that gives you a good feeling. I am really happy about that because that was exactly what I felt when I wrote it. For some time I had had a desire for harmony and nature, good things and good habits, rituals and familiarity, dawns and wind, seasons and colours, soft wool and knitting, seas calm or stormy, songs and community. These were the things I used to surround my characters, setting them in a world with a wealth of scents and sounds, of familiar voices and fragrant flavours. A world I escape into, from time to time, and one where I hope my young readers will readily do the same. Maybe with a glass of warm milk. Without any rush. Because in "Fairy Oak" there's time to smell the scent of the north-west wind and to count the crickets as they chirp away, to observe the play of nature and listen to the pealing of the bells. In "Fairy Oak" there is time. And space to look far, far away, all the way to the horizon. And to set off on great discoveries.

"Fairy Oak" doesn't exist, but it's made of real things. Its valleys, roofs, gardens, faces, clothes, signs, the stones of the houses, doors and lighthouses are real. To illustrate them, my husband and I travelled, read, photographed and scanned thousands of photos. Together we selected over five hundred images. We needed them to get our bearings in Greenvale and to help the artists who illustrated the story. This research was lots of fun: the valley we dreamed of was gradually revealed, in our minds and on sheets of paper. Until, one day, we found ourselves walking along its paths. Walking towards a place where we knew there was a lighthouse, we discovered a wood and a lake. Going down towards the beach, we crossed a wooden bridge over a lively river. On climbing up towards the High Pass we came across the forbidding ruin of a tower.

Today, we could make an accurate map of Greenvale. In the course of our journey we have visited it in summer (in the first book), then in autumn and winter (in the second and third books of the Trilogy). And we returned once more, to have more fantastic new adventures with the series of the Four Mysteries.

To our great joy, we always came across the traces left by some young reader... really young, or young inside. Because at bottom these stories are a bit for everyone.

*Elisabetta
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