

Rosie's Turn

Rosie hated being the "tiny-one-who-needs-carrying," so when the chime pulled them toward the library, she begged to lead. The others hesitated—she was still the smallest, her wings a flutter—until she pointed out the pigeon's foot was caught on a piece of wire. While Jane talked, Rosie darted down, chewed through the thread with her teeth (a fairy trick she'd learned from a mouse), and freed it. The pigeon bobbed grateful and dropped a brass key at her feet.

Later, in the archive, the stairwell door was jammed. Everyone pushed; nothing. Rosie slipped through the gap at the bottom, found the rusted bolt, and—remembering how Emily's wind could vibrate metal—buzzed her wings till the bolt sang loose. The door creaked open.

When they reached Sophia's sketch, it was Rosie's fingertip that first brushed the paper, and the chime flared brightest. The portal's crack sealed a fraction more because her quiet bravery had reminded the pearl that wonder isn't about size—it's about daring to go first. The other girls stared, then grinned. Rosie finally wasn't just the one they protected; she was the one who'd saved the way in.