



**ROOTS**

High above a valley filled with trees, rocks, streams, and patches of soft earth, four tiny orchid seeds traveled together on the wind. They were so small they looked like floating dust, spinning in warm sunlight and laughing as they drifted.

They had names already, even before they had leaves.

There was:

**Tessa the Terrestrial**, who loved the idea of cozy soil.

**Eppy the Epiphyte**, who dreamed of living high in trees.

**Roxy the Rupicolous**, who thought rocks sounded adventurous.

And **Aero the Aerial**, who loved the feeling of floating.

“Where do you think we’ll land?”

“Somewhere sunny!”

“Somewhere exciting!”

“Somewhere together, I hope...”

The wind whistled louder, and suddenly the four seeds were swept downward into a wide garden full of possibilities. The air swirled. The seeds spun. And then—whoosh!—each landed in a different place.

Tessa sank gently into soft, dark soil. Eppy caught on the branch of a tall maple tree. Roxy slid into a narrow crack in a warm rock. Aero drifted down and tangled lightly on a mossy log, barely touching anything at all.

“Is everyone okay?” came a tiny voice from the ground.

“I’m... very high up!” answered another.

“I think I landed in a rock sandwich!” came a third.

“I’m floating and I don’t know how!” giggled the fourth.

They couldn’t move toward each other, but they could still see one another across the garden. It felt strange, but also exciting. This was their adventure.

Soon, something began to happen. Tiny roots pushed out from each seed.

Tessa felt her roots slide into cool earth. It felt like stretching toes into soft sand. The deeper they went, the more she discovered: pockets of moisture, tiny grains of minerals, hidden nutrients. It was like exploring a secret underground world. “Oh wow... there’s food down here!” Her roots spread wider, pulling in water and nutrients. Above the soil, a small green leaf popped up and stretched upward. The warmth above felt wonderful.

Meanwhile, high on the tree branch, Eppy was having a different experience. “No soil? No dirt? No snacks?” Her roots dangled in the air, unsure what to do. Then a breeze carried dust. A drop of rain slid down the bark. Her roots caught it. “Oh! That’s interesting...” More rain followed. Tiny pieces of leaves stuck near her roots. Moisture clung to the bark. Her roots wrapped gently around the branch, holding tight. “I don’t need soil,” she realized. “I can gather what comes from the air!” Her first leaf stretched outward, leaning into the sunlight filtering through the canopy.

Down below, Roxy was working hard. The rock crack was narrow and dry. Her roots pushed carefully into tiny spaces. It wasn’t easy. Sometimes there was almost nothing to drink. Then morning dew formed. A few drops slid into the crack. Her roots grabbed them. “Yes! Tiny sips count!” Wind blew strongly across the cliff. The rock warmed in the sun. Her roots held tightly. “I’m tougher than I thought,” she whispered, sending up a leaf toward the light.

Aero’s situation was the strangest. Suspended from the mossy log, her roots hung freely in the air. They looked pale and silvery. For a moment, nothing happened. Then fog rolled in. Her roots absorbed it. Mist drifted by and her roots drank again. Rain passed through, and her roots

soaked up every drop. "I'm drinking clouds!" she laughed. Her first leaf opened and turned toward the sun. Warmth spread through her stem, and she felt stronger.

Days passed.

The four orchids watched each other grow. They noticed something fascinating. Each one gathered nutrients differently. Tessa collected from the soil. Eppy gathered from rain and dust. Roxy absorbed from rock crevices. Aero drank from air and mist.

But they all did one thing the same: they stretched their leaves toward the sun. The more they reached, the stronger they became.

One afternoon, clouds rolled in and the wind began to howl. A storm swept across the valley. Rain poured. Branches shook. Water rushed down rocks. "I'm slipping!" Roxy felt the water push against her. Her roots tightened.

"Hold on!" Tessa called.

High above, Eppy clung to the branch as it swayed wildly. "This is like a tree roller coaster!"

Aero swung back and forth in the wind. "Wheeeee—okay maybe not wheeeee!"

Lightning flashed. Thunder boomed. But their roots held.

When the storm passed, the valley sparkled. The four orchids were still standing. They felt stronger.

"That was scary..."

"But we made it."

"Our roots helped."

"And the sun is back!"

The next morning, they noticed something new. Tiny buds. Little bumps forming near their leaves.

"What's happening?"

"I think... we're going to bloom!"

Days passed. The buds grew larger.

Meanwhile, a curious caterpillar crawled across the garden. It paused near Tessa's leaf.

"Snack?" it wondered.

Tessa shivered. "Uh-oh..."

Before the caterpillar could take a bite, a ladybug landed nearby. "No munching today," the ladybug announced firmly.

The caterpillar blinked, then waddled away in search of something else. "Thank you!" Tessa called.

"Healthy plants help each other," the ladybug replied, flying off.

Up in the tree, a squirrel scrambled across the branch, nearly knocking Eppy loose.

"Whoa! Watch the roots!" she cried.

The squirrel paused, looked down, and carefully stepped around her. "Sorry, little flower."

"Adventure never stops," Eppy laughed nervously.

On the rock, a lizard warmed itself nearby. Its tail brushed Roxy's leaf. "That tickles!" The lizard blinked lazily and moved along.

Aero, meanwhile, swayed gently as hummingbirds zipped past. One hovered close, curious. "Not blooming yet," Aero said. "Come back later!"

"I will," the hummingbird promised, zipping away.

Finally, one warm morning, the first flower opened.

Tessa bloomed—soft and bright.

Then Eppy opened—elegant and graceful.

Roxy followed—bold and colorful.

Aero bloomed last—delicate and shimmering.

The garden filled with color. The hummingbird returned. Bees arrived. Butterflies danced. A monarch butterfly floated between them, admiring each bloom. “You all look different,” she observed, “but you grew beautifully.”

“We had different places.”

“Different challenges.”

“Different roots.”

“But the same sun.”

The butterfly nodded. “That’s how growth works.”

The four orchids swayed in agreement. They remembered the storm. The dry days. The fog. The wind. The waiting. Even when nothing seemed to be happening, their roots had been working. Even when growth was hidden, life was forming. Even when conditions were hard, they kept stretching toward the light.

The butterfly landed softly between them. “You know,” she added, “you’re like faith.”

“Faith?” the orchids echoed.

“Yes. Some grow in quiet places. Some in high places. Some in hard places. Some in surprising places. But all need roots. All need light. And all need time.”

The orchids felt proud.

Soon, something else began forming—tiny seeds inside their flowers. New life. New adventures waiting.

The breeze returned, gentle this time. The four friends swayed together.

“Different roots,” whispered Tessa.

“Same sun,” answered Eppy.

“Different challenges,” added Roxy.

“Same growth,” Aero finished.

And under the warm light of the valley, the four orchids continued doing what they had learned from the beginning—stretching their leaves, deepening their roots, and growing... slowly, patiently, beautifully.