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Picture Books

Time to Fly: A Fairy Lane Book
Barbara Lanza
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Once a year the fairies of Fairy Lane come together to celebrate the gift of flight. This year's Time to Fly festival is particularly special for Petals, the swift little fairy at the center of this tale. Having proven that she is the fastest child in the village, Petals is selected to sprinkle fairy dust on all of the babies. Her baby sister Violet is excited about the ceremony and anxious to see the dust that will make her fly like her sister. But when Petals looks around for the pouch of fairy dust, it has disappeared.

The only way to find it in time for the feast is to recall each of the places she visited after receiving the dust. To the raspberry patch, Mrs. Bellwort's, and the glade she flies. At each stop she believes she sees sparkling dust and is disappointed when she discovers it is really a leaf covered in dew, a shiny silver spoon, or a spool of gold ribbon. Finally, she decides to look in her bedroom, as her parents had previously suggested. Since Petals is not a tidy fairy, she does not find the magic dust until all of her toys, clothes, and books are neatly arranged about the room. Though the story isn't overtly didactic, the message is clear.

Excitedly, the family flies to the festival. Once there, Petals sprinkles each baby with dust and whispers, "Time to Fly!" When Violet and the other babies flutter their colorful wings and "sail effortlessly above their families," the singing, dancing, and eating begin.

As both author and illustrator, Lanza carefully includes details that extend the story beyond the words on the page. For example, as Petals flies about looking for her pouch of dust, the illustrations depict each place she visits as well as characters making preparations in anticipation of the feast. An array of pastel colors contributes to an inviting mystical world, and the fairies seem reminiscent of angels or porcelain dolls. Petals's feet rarely touch the ground, hinting at her capriciousness, while Violet crawls about looking up at her in admiration.

After Lanza studied art at the Philadelphia College of the Art, she worked as a fashion illustrator in New York City. She has also illustrated greeting cards, collectibles, and other

fairytales such as *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Snow White*. Fairy Lane is similar to the worlds Lanza imagined as a child. Readers will hope that more stories featuring this magical place and these likeable characters will follow. For now, this one deserves a place on the shelf next to classic tales read just before bedtime, sparking the possibility of enchanting dreams in the minds of little ones.

Kaavonia Hinton