

# Unveiling the Language of Flowers: A Journey through Kate Greenaway's Botanical Masterpiece

: The Allure of Victorian Flower Symbolism





## Language of Flowers (illustrated) by Kate Greenaway

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English  
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In the Victorian era, flowers were not mere adornments; they carried hidden meanings that whispered secrets and conveyed emotions. Flower symbolism became a captivating language, enabling people to express sentiments too delicate or profound for words.

Among the masters of this floral code was Kate Greenaway, a celebrated Victorian artist known for her enchanting illustrations. Her book, 'Language of Flowers Illustrated,' remains a timeless masterpiece that captures the beauty and significance of flowers.

### **Kate Greenaway: The Artist and Her Vision**



Born in 1846, Kate Greenaway emerged as a leading figure in the Victorian art scene. Her unique style, characterized by delicate lines, graceful figures, and a nostalgic charm, captivated both critics and audiences.

Greenaway's love for flowers permeated her work. She meticulously studied botanical specimens and infused her illustrations with accurate depictions of petals, stems, and leaves. Her attention to detail and ability to

capture the ethereal beauty of flowers made her an ideal interpreter of the language of flowers.

### **Language of Flowers Illustrated: A Floral Treasury**



Published in 1884, 'Language of Flowers Illustrated' became an instant success. The book featured 60 exquisite color plates, each depicting a different flower alongside its poetic interpretation. Greenaway's vibrant watercolors and graceful compositions give life to the flowers, making the book a visual delight.

Each flower's accompanying verse provides a glimpse into its symbolic meaning. Roses represent love, lilies purity, and violets modesty. By presenting these floral symbols in an accessible and visually appealing format, Greenaway made the language of flowers accessible to a wider audience.

## **A Guide to Victorian Flower Symbolism**

The flowers in 'Language of Flowers Illustrated' offer a comprehensive guide to Victorian flower symbolism. Here are some of the most popular meanings:

- Daisy: innocence, purity
- Rose: love, beauty
- Lily: purity, innocence
- Violet: modesty, faithfulness
- Forget-me-not: remembrance, true love
- Hollyhock: ambition, fertility
- Sunflower: adoration, loyalty

These flower meanings were often used in Victorian courtship and communication. Bouquets and floral arrangements were carefully crafted to convey messages of love, friendship, or sympathy.

## **A Timeless Legacy: Flower Symbolism in Modern Times**

THE ETYMOLOGY AND SYMBOLISM

# of 50 Flowers

**Rose**  
*Rosa*  
Rose comes from French, translating to "pink."  
(Love, passion)

**Sunflower**  
*Helianthus*  
Named after its tendency to turn its face to the sun. *Helianthus* comes from Greek *helios* "sun" and *anthos* "flower."  
(Adaptability, loyalty, and longevity)

**Gerbera Daisy**  
*Gerbera jamesonii*  
Named after Franziska Gerber, the German botanist who helped discover them.  
(Impetuous cheerfulness, joy)

**Lily**  
*Lilium*  
Derived from Latin *lilio*, which may have come from a corrupted pronunciation of a word from an extinct Etruscan or Mediterranean language.  
(Purity, devotion, restored innocence, the church)

**Orchid**  
*Orchis*  
From the Greek *orkhis* meaning "testicle," because of the shape of some orchids' spots.  
(Fertility, elegance, luxury)

**Hydrangea**  
*Hydrangea macrophylla*  
From Greek *hydra* "water" and *angos* "jar or vessel," after the shape of its seed pods.  
(Gratitude, honesty, and understanding)

**Tulip**  
*Tulipa*  
From French *tulipe*, tracing back to the Persian word *talband* "herb" after the shape of the bloom.  
(True love, hope, royalty)

**Daisy**  
*Bellis perennis*  
Old English *degen's eye*, "day's eye," because it opens in the morning and closes at night.  
(Sincerity, purity, childhood, new beginnings)

**Carnation**  
*Dianthus caryophyllus*  
Some scholars believe it comes from "popercution," as it was one of the flowers used for Greek ceremonial crowns.  
(Love, admiration, good fortune)

**Snopdragon**  
*Antirrhinum*  
Resembles the face of a dragon that opens and closes its mouth when touched.  
(Powerful independence, affection)

**African Violet**  
*Saintpaulia*  
Named after its native habitat and true violet hue. The genus named honors Baron Walter von Saint Paul II, who first made it popular in the west and help popularize them during the Victorian era.  
(Sincere wish, faithfulness, joy)

**Anemone/Windflower**  
*Anemone*  
From the Greek *anemos* "blast of the wind." The Anemone was the wind god's favorite flower.  
(Protection against evil or all wishes)  
Red: Death or broken love

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The language of flowers continues to captivate and inspire in the modern era. Florists and gardeners use flower symbolism to create meaningful arrangements, while writers and poets weave floral imagery into their works.

Kate Greenaway's 'Language of Flowers Illustrated' remains a valuable resource for anyone interested in the art of flower symbolism. Its exquisite

illustrations and insightful commentary make it an indispensable guide for florists, gardeners, historians, and anyone seeking to decipher the hidden messages of the floral world.

Kate Greenaway's 'Language of Flowers Illustrated' is a testament to the enduring power of flowers as symbols of emotion and communication. Its exquisite artwork, insightful commentary, and comprehensive guide to Victorian flower symbolism make it a timeless masterpiece that continues to inspire and enchant.

Whether you are a seasoned gardener, a budding florist, or simply a lover of art and nature, 'Language of Flowers Illustrated' is a precious addition to your library. Its pages will transport you to a world of hidden meanings and floral beauty, where every bloom has a tale to tell.

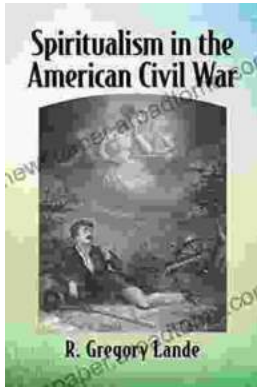


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