



# *Whack a Fairy*

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Humor, Magic, Supernatural

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“We were playing Whack-a-Mole,” explained the teen.

The judge sat back and looked down his nose. “You’ll have to explain, young man. I’m old.” He didn’t look that old. Perhaps forty. But he had old eyes. Not that the teenager noticed. He was too anxious to explain and avoid a fine.

“It’s an arcade game,” he explained. “The moles pop their heads up and you hit them. You get points for hitting them.”

“I see,” said the judge. “I believe I understand the concept.” The judge’s eyes grew distant. He remembered a long time ago.

A very, very long time ago...

“If you see a fairy, son, you grab a plank and swing it for all you’re worth.” His father eyed him doubtfully.

“Which ain’t much, I’ll grant you, but...”

“But what’s the fairy done to me, Da?”

“It’s what the fairy will do, given the chance.” They stood in the field behind their home, considering the fairy circle at their feet.

“But, Da, I’ve heard you say the law says innocent ‘til proven guilty, and that’s what’s wrong with the bloody

country, that the bloody English don't follow the law."

His father sighed in exasperation. "That law's for humans, son, not for fairies."

"Why?"

"Ach!" His father made as though to hit him, then subsided. "Do as I say, or you'll be the sorrier for it!"

That long-ago-boy had promised, and when one day he did see a fairy, he had picked up a plank from the stack by the cottage and raced over to the circle. The fairy was all sparkles and devilment, teasing the rabbits into jumping out of their burrows. The boy paused to laugh, and the fairy turned and laughed with him. The boy could not bring himself to whack the fairy, who had done him no harm but only caused him to laugh, and the fairy had flitted down one of the rabbit burrows and not come back. The boy did not tell his father.

At the end of the month, when the moon was full, the boy woke to find a gloriously beautiful creature hovering over his bed. She smiled at him and her teeth caught the light of the moon. He had never seen teeth so clean and white — and sharp. "You showed compassion to my reckless brother," she said in the voice he had imagined the stars to use when he had imagined the stars speaking to him. He stared at her speechlessly. "Why did you do so?"

It took him a minute to realize she had asked him a question. "I – I – innocent until proven guilty!" he blurted.

She laughed, and then he could see her resemblance to her brother. If he had been wary, he would have seen the same devilry, but he was too enraptured to be wary, and when she held out her hand to him, he took it gladly.

And so he left his life and never saw his Da or Ma or the cottage again.

She took him to the fairy circle, and it opened for her into a world of beauty like the night sky come to life and peopled by creatures unimaginable. She told him he was brilliant and wise and would be a great leader for his people. She told him he had much to learn in addition to the one great principle he had already mastered. She spoke to him of the law and showed him books from cultures long past. He studied diligently because she wanted him to, and he never considered that time was passing. It seemed no more than a night, maybe two, when she told him he was ready.

“Ready for what?” he asked in the voice he did not realize had changed from his boy’s treble.

“Ready to be the leader of your people,” she said, a little impatiently. She had grown bored with his dedication. He was much too serious for eternity. “Go remind them that we exist!” She gave him a book of law and pushed him out onto the hillside where his family once had lived.

No need to say that the world was a horrifying place now to this young man, who knew nothing of airplanes and computers. He stumbled and starved his way along, and found kind people to help him, and unkind people who attempted to rob him, but he had learned a few things from the fairies about distrust and self-defense. Eventually, he learned that his law book – a very ancient copy of Hammurabi’s Code – was worth a great deal of money.

It paid for his law degree...

“Pat, see, he was winnin’, but Eileen said he was cheatin’, and Eileen got that mad, she whacked him instead of the mole. So, Eileen’s my girl, so I had to support her, and when Pat whacked her back, I had to defend her. You get that, right?”

“Mmmm,” said the judge, lost in memory.

“Before I knew it, Pat and me was rolling on the floor, and I’m sorry about it, because he’s been my best for as long as I can remember. Then Duncan, the guy what runs the place comes over and he starts whackin’ at us, and Eileen’s a whacking away at him, and then the coppers came, and, well – Eileen’s only been mine for a month, and I dunno whether she was even right inna first place. Pat don’t usually cheat. He don’t need to, he’s

that good at Whack-a-Mole.”

“Do you have a father, young man?”

The teenager obviously wondered if the judge had taken a toke or two. “Yuh.”

“And has your father ever given you any advice?”

“Yuh...”

“What advice has he given you?”

“Don’t have sex ‘til you’re married, don’t ever get married, don’t smoke weed, don’t drink beer and hard liquor at the same time, and always stand by your mates.”

“And which of those did you disregard last night?”

The boy had to think a bit. “I ain’t had sex yet, ‘cause Eileen wouldn’t. I’m not married. I don’t smoke, I eat brownies. I was only drinking beer last night. You mean about standing by my mates?”

“Exactly.”

The boy ruminated sadly, “I should’ve listened to Pat, not Eileen. I should’ve dragged her away and told her to hoof it.”

“I believe you have learned a valuable lesson,” said the judge, whacking his gavel. “I sentence the three of you to pay any damages to Mr. Duncan’s arcade. And I would remind you, personally, to always, always, heed your father’s advice.”

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