

A Christmas Fairy Tale

The good fairy stared through the sifting curtain of snow and wondered where in the enchanted forest she was being taken. Her body ached and she had no idea how much further the goblins were going to drag her. The snow that was already on the ground rubbed her delicate bare skin, and the cold now burned as though she was on fire. Her pretty dress was getting wet and torn and it saddened her. She and her mother had spent weeks planning and making the dress to perfection.

It'd been their private project. Something to do while the men of the house slumbered in their beds. Her job had been to weave and sew the flecks of gold and silver into the rich material. Her fingers, not as nimble as her mothers, had made mistakes, but her mother had corrected them making the dress perfect. When finally finished, she'd looked at her reflection in the mirror at her hard work and felt proud. Now, all that hard work was being ruined. Why did goblins have to be so careless and rough? The least they could do was carry her.

Above her head, the sky filled with dark clouds, heavy with water that was turning into ice. She murmured a private wish that the clouds would break for just a moment so she could see the stars. The night had started off with such promise. Her true love had waited for her and his face was enchanted when she entered the ball and seen her new dress. He swept her up in his arms and when the music started, in that moment, there was only he and she, no one else existed.

Oh, if only she'd not left the ball in such haste, then she'd be with him now. Safe in his arms, but the excitement had made her head spin and she'd found it difficult to see. So, with the promise of returning home early to her mother ringing in her ears, she'd left the ball.

Suddenly, she felt the goblins drop the top half of her body onto the ground. She winced as her head hit a small rock. She wanted to rub the pain away, but whatever spell the goblins had used she was no longer able to move her body. Helpless and without any magick she would not be able to escape on her own. What's more she was sure her delicate wings were now fractured and it would take weeks, even months for them to heal properly. What sort of fairy would she be without them? One of the goblins crouched over her, slime and snot dripped from his nose onto her exposed flesh. She struggled to move her face away from his grotesque features, but could not. Why did all goblins look the same? With their beady eyes and bulging stomach that stretched the coats they wore. They were so ugly, maybe that was why they stole fairies; they probably repulsed their own kind.

With a cold wet hand, a goblin grabbed her face and squeezed her cheeks hard, inspecting her like she was some beast to be bought at the market.

'You're such a pretty fairy. I suspect a princess too,' he said.

She could hear the other goblins laughing at his joke and passing their own comments about her beauty. Of course, she was beautiful, her hair was as golden as the sun and her skin like milk, pure and soft. She knew this; everyone told her all the time, but them being rough with her was ruining her beauty.

'Who's going first?' one asked.

'There is no rush. The night is young,' the goblin that sat on top of her answered.

As she lay there a thought occurred to her. If they were in the enchanted forest someone would soon find her. It was a place she'd played as child, and many of her friends lived nearby. She could be saved. Something cold and sharp touched neck and she felt her heart race as it moved to her exposed cleavage. Closing her eyes, she told herself to be strong. Someone would soon come and save her. All she needed to do was wait.

The sound of a wolf howling in the night caused the goblins to quieten and be still. She too felt fear. The forest was plagued by the beasts, especially when the moon was high, a reason no one travelled the woods on a night. Wait! If the wolves were out then no one would come for her. She wasn't going to be saved. Turning her head towards where bushes lined the path, she allowed herself to be filled with hope as she heard someone walking close by. She opened her mouth to call out, but the goblin upon her was quicker as he clamped his rotting hand upon her mouth.

'Be still,' he hissed.

The footsteps moved away. They probably belonged to a woodland sprite, and even though they were the fairies cousins, there was never any love lost between them. All hope of being saved was now diminishing very quickly as she felt her hands being abruptly pulled over head and held down into the snow. The weight of the goblin shifted upon her and she saw him give the others a leering smile. This was it. She knew it.

Fairies who were captured by goblins were never the same again. She was going to become ugly and twisted just like them and her pretty new dress would be wasted. Before she closed her eyes to block out whatever evil magick they were going to use on her, she looked up and saw the clouds break. There in the sky she saw the belt of the hunter Orion and thought to herself what a beautiful sight.

Never before had DCI Collins seen such barbarity in all his years on the force. The call had come just hours earlier when a late night reveller had discovered the body. So far they'd pieced together that the girl had attended the Christmas ball at her local college and left very early. Partygoers had seemed surprised at her staggering state considering they'd not seen her drink

much and yet, they'd left her to walk into the darkness alone. She'd possibly taken something, unknown to her, because there seemed to be no sign of a struggle on her part. The girl's body lay naked in the snow, her fresh young skin cut and sliced mercilessly. Beside her were the remains of her costume and the cheap tacky wings that could be bought at any costume shop. They were all covered in mud and dried blood, evidence of the mutilation that had taken place.

The body was now being lifted into a body bag ready for her family to identify. In the distance Collins heard the church bells ring throughout the park telling the city that Christmas morning had arrived and with the sound his daughters favourite Christmas decoration came to mind. It was wreath that held a gold and silver fairy and upon it was written,
‘Every time a bell rings, a fairy gets her wings.’

He knelt down and with a gloved hand he picked up the costume and wings and pushed them into the evidence bag. With a heavy heart he made his way towards his car knowing it would be he that had to break the news to a family that had lost their very own Christmas fairy.