



“John, can you come out here please?” Johnny’s mom yelled through the open window of their house.

Thinking he was going to be asked to help with chores, Johnny drug his feet the entire way out their back door.

“What is it?” he asked his mom.

“I’d like you to come help me with a fun project. I know how much you love to build things, and I bought all this wood so that we could build some fairy homes for our garden. What do you think?” She smiled excitedly waiting for Johnny’s response.

As excited he was at the thought of spending the day getting to use the power tools and build actual miniature houses, he couldn’t help but think building them for fairies was kind of silly.

“I mean, I’ll help. But you know fairies don’t exist right?” He didn’t want to hurt his mom’s feelings, but she had to be told at some point.



His mom's bubbly laughed filled their backyard. "That's what you think," she said slyly before directing him to go get all the tools they'd need out of their garage.

While they're working, Johnny's mom tells him dozens of stories from her childhood in the countryside and about the sprites and the fairies who lived there. At first, it was all he could do to not roll his eyes, but her stories were so fantastical and so detailed that they eventually drew him in. He could almost see the tiny winged creatures she was describing, and as he built the miniature houses he imagined them moving in.

It took them almost a whole week during summer vacation, but they eventually finished all of the houses, complete with doors and windows, steps, and even a fireplace to keep warm at night. When they laid them all out in the garden, even Johnny couldn't deny that they looked as if they already were the homes of such fantastical creatures as fairies and woodland sprites.

For the next two weeks, he found himself finding any excuse to run into the backyard and look at the fairy village. He kept reminding himself that he didn't believe in fairies, but it didn't stop him from checking just to be sure.

Eventually though, after a dozen fruitless checks, he gave up entirely and the fairy garden he and his mom spent so much time and effort and energy creating receded to the back of his mind. He returned to his old routine and all but forgot about the little village in his backyard.

Then, one night, Johnny was out in the backyard playing basketball when, out of the corner of his eye, he thought he saw a light appear in one of the fairy houses. His entire body shifted its focus from the basket above his head to the garden only a stone's throw away.

He blinked several times before allowing himself to even believe what he was seeing. There was a light. It was coming from the two-story house his mom had said absolutely needed a red roof to look as inviting as possible. He immediately placed the ball gently on the ground and began tiptoeing his way over to the garden, so as not to spook it.

When he was only a few feet away, the light in the house went off. Nervous that he might have missed his chance to see a real fairy, he took the last few steps at a much quicker pace



before knocking politely on the door with the knuckle of his pinky finger.

To his great surprise, the door began to open and then all of a sudden, a real live fairy appeared. It looked exactly as his mom had described, with skin the texture of a mermaid's tail but in all the colors of the rainbow.

Still in shock, Johnny just stared at the creature before him.

Thankfully, the fairy had much more presence of mind and also better manners. It flew up to the height of Johnny's face before waving in a gesture of hello.

Johnny waved back awkwardly, his hands like jello. The fairy pointed to the house and back to Johnny in a clear attempt to ask whether Johnny was the one who had built it. Johnny nodded his head and wasn't at all prepared for the rush of wings that flew at his face only seconds later. Before he knew what was happening, he felt the creature's smooth, cold skin wrap itself around his cheek in a great big hug.

Sufficiently thanked for having provided the fairy with a new home, the fairy flew back into the house to make itself comfortable while Johnny knelt there for another hour just watching it go about its business.

The next morning, Johnny ran to the fairy garden to see if the fairy was still there. But although there were embers in the fireplace, the fairy was nowhere to be seen. In his surprise the night before, he had forgotten to tell his mom about what he'd seen and he really wanted to show her.

He ran inside to tell her about it now and to share the bad news with her that the fairy already left. But instead of being heartbroken like he expected, she simply smiled in that knowing motherly way and said, "Oh, don't worry. It'll be back."

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