```
of the control of the
remember that day perfectly, perhaps because Mandy tol
picked. We all sat around the table. (Father was away
nking, "Eat." The first bite was delicious. I finished t
re you doing?" Mother said. "Little piggy." Mandy I
ngue and felt like a sticky mass of glue as I fough
must go to bed now." A wish or a request had n
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ect. I was free
g on one foot wasn't the worst order I could be
oken someday without Lucinda's help. But I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      didn't know how. I didn't ev
rmless and saw me too infrequently to issue
rmless as they were. I'd hold the bowl, but
n us, with Mother laughing and egging eac
"And she'd reconsider. When I was eight,
                                                                                                                                                                                                              move my feet so she would hav
                                                                                                                                                                                               exactly, while still managing to fru s because you don't have to." "I do
                                                                                                                                                                                          I don't want to race." "I command you
                                                                                                                                                                                    our ed from her nose. Our friendship en
. But I wouldn't have anyway. I had lea
                                                                                                                                                                                 rne d caution. When I was almost fiftee
around the vegetables. Since Father
Mandy had said to, even though I grim
s much worse, too sick to drink or eat
                                                                                                                                                                                          ed at the soup and at Mandy's retre
                                                                                                                                                                                          nything. She said there was a knife
t sometimes I made Mother laugh. Exc
d for Sir Peter." Sir Peter was Father.
                                                                                                                                                                                          t the laugh would turn into a coug
got the physician, who hurried me aw
would whisper then, stepping down th
her ride, and a third, and a fourth. Wh
                                                                                                                                                                                          av from Mother's side. Our hallwa
                                                                                                                                                                                        e stairs in an especially stately wa
                                                                                                                                                                                        en I got to the bottom of the stair
st chance of being granted. The castle
ere overgrown, but Bertha swore the c
                                                                                                                                                                                          had been abandoned when King
                                                                                                                                                                                          andle trees had power. I went st
                                                                                                                                                                                            d more like the high chancello
                                                                                                                                                                                               and hot as a hydra's swamp
                                                                                                                                                                                             y carved with designs of fairi
or finished, it was my task to
casket was made of gleaming mahogan here to find her. When the high chancell
                                                                                                                                                                                               orse was the creak as the cof
                                                                                                                                                                                                myself. Father pressed my f
through its leaves and threw myself dow
never talk again, or laugh together. Or swi
would have said, I was a spectacle. How m
                                                                                                                                                                                                uch time had gone by? I had y? Although the prince was o
r too, although the sharp angles of King Je
oom for a carriage to pass between us, I wa
Char too," he added. The king! "Thank you,
                                                                                                                                                                                                    lked at his side. He moved clo
                                                                                                                                                                                                      ' I said. "Thank you, Char," he
                                                                                                                                                                                                        the edge in the shape of the ch
                                                                                                                                                                                                     g to rain. I could make out one fi
                                                                                                                                                                                                        le them stay. "No, I didn't want a
d worried, as if, perhaps, he should have ma
                                                                                                                                                                                                       r you were. You make up your ow
                                                                                                                                                                                                         oke. "An accident," I protested Bu
                                                                                                                                                                                                         , even though it was my real name
                                                                                                                                                                                                           hrough the window, laughing agai
                                                                                                                                                                                                           ryone who counts anyway," he sai
                                                                                                                                                                                                              tful. "I'm sorry she's dead." Nathan fli
r mother was beautiful." His voice was regre
                                                                                                                                                                                                              ul. Everything was just as it had been
osamunde, the wooden doll in the gown wit
w, I kept thinking instead of Father and gett
                                                                                                                                                                                                                ing dressed. Once I had overheard B
elfish as he is, not fairies or gnomes or elve
far that I feared I would slide off the bed. I h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 s or giants." For a full three minutes
e to wear another mourning gown, I put on
full of people in black. Father came to me i
ling black satin. "My poor child, we feel fo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                 r you." The voice was syrupy. "And Sir Peter, it's dreadful to see you on such a tragic occasion." An extra tight squee ere two smaller versions of herself, but without the rouge. The younger one also lacked her mother's abundant younger girl. "Beg pardon," I said. She didn't answer, didn't move, only watched me. Father continued. "A t two years. "Delighted to make your acquaintance," she said, smiling and showing large front teeth. S e was the one I'd bumped. "I'm glad to meet you," she said, her voice too loud. She was about my k with Sir Peter." She took Father's arm, and they left us. "Our hearts weep for you," Hattie beg
dy's arm. I curtsied and knocked into the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                her hand out to me as though she expected me to kiss it or bow over it. I stared, uncertain what to do. She lower age. The furrows of a frown were permanently etched between her eyes. "Comfort Eleanor in her grief," Dam an. "When you bellowed at the funeral, I thought what a poor thing you are." "Green isn't a mourning col , Dame Olga, says yo ur father is very rich. She says he can make money out of anything." "Out y Elean or was rich when they got married, but your father made her richer." "We'r
w days." Hattie was older than I, by abou
ed her arm, but continued to smile. Oliv
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        m. "This is a fine hall, almost as fine as the palace, where I'm going to live someday. Our m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         other, Dame Olga, says your father was poor when he married your
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  says L
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         or was rich when they got married, but your father made her richer." "We'r stairs and Hattie had to look everywhere. She opened the wardrobe in Moth nounced, "Forty-two windows and a fireplace in every room. The windows ey lived in a hollow log. "You'll have to visit us and see for yourself," Hattie m a whole roast hart with ivy threaded through its antlers to butter cookies began, but her sister interrupted firmly. "Oh, no. No thank you. We never ea elicious." Hattie edged toward the food. "Quail eggs are such a delicacy. T said. "Well, maybe a little." A giant couldn't eat half a leg of deer plus a hug. Gooseberry tarts and currant bread and cream trifle and plum pudding an neppermint sauce. They brought their plates close to their faces so their faces.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         o be rich." "Would you show us the rest of the manor?" Hattie aske
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                t up
er's room and, before I could stop he
must have cost a trunkful of gold KJ
said in response to my silence. We
as small and lacy as snowflakes. I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         r, ran her hands over Mother's gowns. When we got back to the hal s." "Do you want to know about our manor?" Olive asked. I didn't c
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  I, she a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                             stood near the side table, which was loaded with mountains of fo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  od. fro
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              wondered how Mandy had had time to cook it all. "Would you like
                                                                                                                                                                                                                            akes away our appetites." "My appetite—" Olive tried again. "Our are fifty at least." More quail eggs than windows. "I like gooseber f the fifty quail eggs and go back for dessert. But Hattie could. O cake—all dribbled over with butter rum sauce and apricot sauc
t at parties. The excitement quite t
en brass KJs apiece. Olive, there
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           etites are small. M
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        r worries. But it looks
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         We mustn't," Hatti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             peppermint sauce. They brought their plates close to their faces so their f
y so often to pat her mouth daintily with her napkin. Then she'd tuck in agai
Mother's chair. Today it had been moved near the food. I had never conce
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                distance to travel. Olive ate steadily, but Hattie put her fork down
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                gusting to watch. I looked down at a throw rug that used to lie u
n, as avidly as ever. It was dis
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          d, I saw movement. Wind stirred the grass by the boar's feet. I blinked and t relax. One of the hunters limped, and I felt a cramp in his calf. The boar gas d eating. I started. I felt as if I'd been in the rug. "Nothing. Just the carpet." g out." "They looked like an ogre's eyes," Hattie said. "Buggy. But there, y ind Mandy liked to slaughter for stew. And Olive's face was as blank as a p
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                nters chased a boar toward a fringe of scarlet wool. As I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ed again and it started again. The dog had just bayed. I felt his t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ar and rage. "What are you looking at?" Olive asked. She had fi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 An ordinary carpet with an ordinary design. "Your eyes were po "She never looked normal. She looked like a rabbit. A fat one,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           complacently. "They're too small to pop." The smile remained, but now it sed to be known for her ill breeding too." Mother used to be known. The pa gged me, and my nose filled with the stink of spoiled milk. They left. Father
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  pose your eyes ever pop out," I said. "I don't think so." Hattie's
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  give you, child We in the peerage are forgiving. Your poor mot e. "Girls!" Dame Olga bore down on us. "We must be going." S
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          the kitchen. She was piling up dirty dishes. "Seems like those people didn' ur food before." Mandy's cooking was better than anybody else's. Mother a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  n gate, saying good-bye to the rest of the guests. I went to Man
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      on an apron and pumped water into the sink. "They never tast
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             would be delicious, but never as wonderful as when Mar
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          , you know the one? Something funny happened to me when I looked at it o stir a pot of soup. "What do you mean?" "It's just a fairy joke." A fairy rug
mehow, it reminded before." "Oh, that s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       me of the rug. "The carpet in the hall with the hunters and the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   illy thing. You shouldn't pay attention to that old rug." She tur w?" "It belonged to Lady." Mandy always called Mother "Lady.
! "How do you kno
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             wasn't an answer. "Did my fairy godmother give it to her?" "A long ti
go." "Did Mother
n though she nev
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ever tell you who my fairy godmother is?" "No, she didn't. Wh
er told you?" "Know what?" "Who my fairy godmot her is." "I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           your father?" "He's outside, saying good-bye. Do you know anyway? Eve
he'd wanted you to know, your mother would have told you." "She was go
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ised. Please tell, Mandy." "I am." "You are not telli ng. Who it?" CHAPTER FOUR My mouth opened automatic ally. Th
ng to. She prom
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             is it?" "Me. Your fairy godmother is me. Here, taste the carrot soup. It's fo
dinner. How is en the carrots
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           descended and a hot—but not burning—swallow poured in. Mandy had go
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    at their sweetest, carrotiest best. Weaving in and o p in the world, magical soup that nobody but Mandy
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         he carr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              r flavors: lemon, turtle broth, and a spice I couldn't name. The be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ots w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             This was fairy soup. Mandy was a fairy! But if Mandy was a fairy, e, I would have if I could. If she'd left the hair in my curing soup, s
st carrot sou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              could
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   make. Th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              e rug. Th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 e soup.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             aved her.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      "Oh, sweet
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ther dead? "You're not a fairy." "Why not?" "If you w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ere, you w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ould have s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       today." "You knew? Why did you let her?" "I didn't k
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    t stop dying." I c
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 as too sick. We can'
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             e stool next to the stove, sobbing so hard I couldn't catch my breat
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      now till she w
h. Then Ma
Mandy wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ndy's arms were around me, and I was crying into the s crying too. Her face was red and blotchy. "I was her fa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ruffles along t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         he neck of her apron, where
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  I had cried so m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           any times before for smaller reasons. A drop landed on my fin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             'And your grandmother's." She blew her nose. I pushed out of Man
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      oo," Man
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    iry go dmother t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               thin and yo
ded. "Show you wh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ul. Mandy was as tall as a fairy was supposed to be, but who ever hear
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        for a new look at her. She couldn't be a fairy. Fairies we
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ung and be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     y with frizzy gray hair and two chins? "Show me," I deman
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              at?" "That you'r
d of a fair
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 e a fairy. Disappear or something." "I don't have to show you anything
                                                                                                                                                             e exception of Lucinda—fairies never disappear when other creatures are present." "Can you?"
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      "We can, but we don't. Lucinda is the only one who's rude e
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              nough and stupid enough." "Why is it stupid?" "Because it lets people ki
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   y." "Oh, that again. No one knows but you. And you'd better You dry." "Why?" "Because the dishes are we
                                                                                      y." She started to wash the dishes. "Help me." "Do Nathan and Bertha know?" I carried plates to the sink. "Know what?" "You're a fair
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        keep it a secret." Mandy looked her fiercest. "Why?" She just scowled. "I will
ow you'r
I promise. But why?" "I'll tell you. People only like the idea of fairi s, mostly. People know we can do magic, so the y want us to
                                                                                                                                               es. When they bump up against a particular, real-as-corn fairy, there's always trouble." She rinsed a platter
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               t, that's why." She saw my surprised face. "Oh, why is there trouble? Two reason
                                                                                                             v want us to
                                                                                                                                                  solve their problems for them. When we don't, they get mad. The other reason is we're immortal. That gets them
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            mad too. Lady wouldn't speak to me for a week when her father died." "Why doesn
t Lucinda care if people know she's a fairy?"
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        I?" "Always. They are always awful, but some people are delighted to have a present fr iry blood! "Can I do magic? Shall I live forever? Would Mother have if she hadn't gotten sick
                                                                                                           She likes the
                                                                                                                                                m to know, the fool. She wants them to thank her when she gives them one of her awful gifts." "Are they always awfu
om a fairy, even if it makes them miserab
                                                                                                           "Why did Mot
                                                                                                                                                   her know you're a fairy? Why do I know?" "All the Eleanor line are Friends of the Fairies. You have fairy blood in you." Fa
                                                                                                                                                            ve, you can't do magic or live forever. It's just a drop of fairy blood. But there's one way it has already started to show. Your feet haven
                                                                                                               . And no, lo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              't grown for a few years, I'll warrant." "None of me has grown for a few years." "The rest of you will soon e
"Very few. You're the only one left in Kyrria
                                                                                                                     when the control of t
nough, but you'll have fairy feet, like your
                                                                                                                 mother did
ny feet were fashionable, but would they make m
                                                                                                                   e even cl
agic. Big magic." "We don't do big magic. Lucinda's
Mandy said. "Maybe a bandit was going to rob someo
ve built a stronger roof." "Maybe, maybe not. Or maybe
                                                                                               r maybe I'd cause a flood and people would be killed. That's the problem with big magic?" "Of course it was. The numskull!" Mandy scoured a pot so hard that it clattered and banged against the copp
. Please, Ma ndy." "I don't know how. I only know it can be done." "If I told Lucinda how terrible it is, would she lift the spell, do you think?" "I doubt it, but maybe. Then again, she might take away one spell and give you another even worse. The trouble with Lucinda is, ideas pop into her head and come out as spells." "What d
er sink. "Tell me how to break the spell
oes she look like?" "Not like the rest of us. But you'd better hope you never lay eyes on her." "Where does she live?" I asked. If I could find her, maybe I could persuade her to lift my curse. After all, Mandy could be wrong. "We're not on speaking terms. I don't keep track of the whereabouts of Lucinda the Idiot. Watch that bowl!" The order came too late. I got the broom. "Are all Friends clumsy?" "No, sweet. Fairy blood does not make you clumsy. That's human. You don't see me dropping plates, do you?" I started to sweep, but it wasn't necessary. The pieces of pottery gathered themselves together and flew into the trash bin. I couldn't believe it. "That's about all I do, honey. Small magic that can't hurt anybody. Handy sometimes, though. No sharp bits left on the floor." I started into the bin. The shards lay there. "Why didn't you turn it back into a bowl?" "The magic's too big. Doesn't seem like it, but it is. Could hurt someone. You never know." "You mean fairies can't see the future? If you could, you'd know, wouldn't you?" "We can't see the future any more than you can. Only gnomes can, a few of them anyway." A bell tinkled somewhere in the house. Father calling one of the servants. Mother never used the bell. "Were you my great-grandmother?" How old was Mandy, really? Bertha came in. "Sir Peter wants you in the study, miss." "What does he want?" I asked. "He didn't
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