

CHAPTER THREE

Fairy Laws and Pixie Rules

S. Martin slowly raised his head. “You want to hire me?”

“Yes, yes,” said Coach Dribble, as he unfolded the papers and shoved them into S. Martin’s hands. “I think something strange has happened to Henry and Gavin and I think these papers have something to do with their disappearance.”

S. Martin slowly unfolded the documents. “These look like the rules to some sort of game,” said S. Martin as he started perusing the papers. “I think they are,” agreed Coach Dribble, nodding his head, “and I think the game has something to do with the boys’ disappearance.”

“Hmm,” S. Martin rubbed his chin, “and this last page looks like some sort of contract.” S. Martin stood up and walked over to the credenza. “I’d asked Dirk to put my supplies away; I hope there’s a writing pad and pens in here.” S. Martin closed his eyes and opened the door. He slowly squinted open one eye and then the other. S. Martin was pleasantly surprised. Dirk had actually done a very nice job of neatly arranging pens, note pads, staplers and various other office accoutrements. He grabbed a pad and pen and settled back in his chair. Coach Dribble had pulled one of the other chairs up to the desk.

“Okay Coach, tell me your story.”

“Well,” said Coach Dribble, “I think it all started the day Din Sneedly gave out freebies at the Gamers Emporium on Main Street.”

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Gladly settled himself comfortably on the couch and stretched back. Lillian and Solomon plunked themselves into the two chairs facing the couch. The ornate coffee table their parents had picked up in China was between them. Solomon put the documents from the printer in the middle of the table and Gladly promptly put his feet up on the edge of the table.

“Aggh!” Screeched Lillian. “Get your feet off!” Gladly quickly removed his feet and sat forward. He cleared his throat.

“Well, I guess the Derry Dell part begins four days ago, Monday, at that gaming place on Main Street...”

“You mean Din Sneedly’s Gamers Emporium? I was there on Monday!” Said Solomon, excitedly.

“Solomon,” gasped Lillian, “Mum and Dad said you were banned from Din’s store on weekdays, you’re only allowed there on Saturdays!”

“Cool your jets, Lil,” said Solomon rolling his eyes. “I was only there for a few minutes after school with Terr and a couple of other guys. Terr said some guy was giving away free games, so we just went in for a minute. We both got one.

Henry and Gavin got a free one a couple of weeks ago. Then I went back to Terr's. It wouldn't work in his computer. It was no big deal."

"No big deal! You promised Mum and Dad you wouldn't go to Din's during the week! And Din giving away something free I find hard to believe!"

"Geez, Lil, don't get your shorts in a knot. It was like, less than five minutes and it wasn't Din, it was this other guy!"

Din Sneedly, real name Jacob, ran the Gamers Emporium and Drum Studio. He was somewhat of a local rock legend. Din had toured for a number of years with The Budgie Hammers. His parents had assumed that he would follow in his father's footsteps and take over the local pharmacy, so they were shocked and appalled when he hooked up with a band. But it should have come as no surprise. Din was a great drummer. He'd inherited an old set of drums from his uncle and it became apparent pretty quickly that he had a natural talent for the skins. His mother used to shout at him to "keep the din and racket down", hence the nickname, Din. He finally got tired of the road and returned to Derry Dell and opened the emporium. Din still taught drum lessons at the back of the store and he was well known for being cheap, but he had a soft spot for the local teens and did enjoy them hanging around the Gamers Emporium. Besides, he always had a captive audience for his rock and roll stories, which he loved to tell.

"You are so totally irresponsible, Solomon"

“Oh sure, look who’s talking! Who went shopping this afternoon? Eh?”

“And who’s always begging Mum and Dad for more responsibility? You couldn’t even put the lunch stuff away!”

“Ahem.” Coughed Gladly as he looked back and forth between Lillian and Solomon. “I thought you two wanted to know how to get Jerome back?”

Lillian and Solomon turned abruptly and looked at Gladly. “It’s Darwin!” They shouted in unison. “You’re right, you’re right,” said Lillian guiltily. “Here we are arguing over Solomon being an idiot and we should be listening to you so we can find Darwin.”

“Hey, I’m not an idiot!”

“Solomon, shut up. Let’s find out what Mr. Yarble has to say. Please, Gladly, tell us what’s going on.”

“Well, as I started to tell you, the day I was at your emporium, I…”

“No way!” Interrupted Solomon. “You weren’t at Din’s, I would’ve noticed!”

“As a matter of fact, yes I was at, er, Din’s,” countered Gladly.

“Nope,” said Solomon shaking his head, “the only guy there was the dude handing out the games, and Din.”

“I assure you, that was me.”

“Bogus buddy,” said Solomon, standing up. “Lil, there’s no way we should

listen to this guy, I think he's yanking our chain. I think you should go."

"Oh dear," sighed Gladly. "I really was hoping to get to this part a little later, but I guess I'll have to show you now so I can get on with the rest of what's going on." He lifted his arm and swung it in a wide arc, like he was throwing an imaginary Frisbee. There seemed to be just the tiniest flicker of sparkles when he moved his arm.

"Whoa! It's you, I mean him," Solomon blinked and sat down again

"Mom?" Gaspd Lillian as she looked at Gladly. "Why am I seeing a kind of bad video version of my Mom?"

"It's still just me," said Gladly, a little impatiently. "Now can I get on with my story?"

"Way cool!" whistled Solomon, "how did you do that?"

"Oops, Mom's fading and now it's just you again. What the heck is going on?" implored a confused Lillian.

"If you two could just be quiet for a few minutes I'll tell you."

Lillian and Solomon gestured as if they were zipping their mouths shut.

"Thank you, finally," said an exasperated Gladly.

"Mmmph," mumbled Lillian and Solomon.

"Fine, now let me tell you the history of K.O. Bolt."

Gladly settled back on the couch and crossed his legs. Lillian winced as he

put his feet up on the couch, but said nothing. Both Lillian and Solomon figured it was going to be a lengthy story. Gladly cleared his throat and began.

“Years ago and I mean many, many years ago the Bolt Family prevailed over massive tracts of land around here. Notice that I said prevailed, not owned. That’s because they couldn’t own it. The Bolt Family were Leprechauns and Leprechauns can’t own property. But what they can own or keep is anything they find on the property, which of course includes the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, if they ever found it.”

Lillian and Solomon said nothing, but at the mention of the pot of gold, their eyes grew wide.

“As far as I know, no-one in the family ever found anything at the end of any rainbow, but it never stopped them from searching. Now at some point legend has it one of the elder Bolts swore up and down that when he got to the end of a rainbow that he was chasing, he saw a number of fairies flitting off with the pot of gold, but he was known to imbibe quite fiercely, so nobody really believed him and thought he was probably seeing things. The family dispersed over the years, everyone forgot about the land, the fairies and the pots of gold, until now.

Kimmeridgian Orlando Bolt is the great, great, great grand-nephew of the original K.O. Bolt and he’s possessed. He’s convinced the fairies stole the gold and buried it somewhere on the land the Bolt’s prevailed on and he’s determined to claim

what he believes is his birth right.”

“But what does...” Lillian started to say. Gladly held up his hand to silence her.

“I’m getting there.”

“With the advent of computers and all these lovely search engines, K.O., who is a computer genius, let me tell you, started doing research about his distant family, the legend about the fairies and how much land the Bolts had once prevailed on. Suffice it to say that he got mad, really mad and you know the old saying “don’t get mad, get even”, well, that’s what he’s up to. He’s been busy surveying all the land that the Bolt family prevailed over and he’s convinced, don’t ask me why, that the fairies would have stashed the pot of gold in old mines. Now he’s managed to rule out every mine in the area, except one and that one mine sits just outside of Derry Dell.”

Lillian’s eyes got even wider. “The old Pruitt Mine!” She exclaimed, “I learned about it in civics class! But...”

“Patience please,” said Gladly.

Solomon sat mesmerized, his chin resting in his hand and his mouth open.

“So, K.O. figured out what he needed and what he needed to do. First of all he captured most of the fairies in the area, a difficult thing to do actually. Most fairies are very smart and extremely cautious; they don’t want to be caught, bad

karma. But he knew what would work. Like I said, this boy does his homework. He appealed to their vanity. He sent an invitation to every fairy in the area to attend The Gossamer Gala, an evening of the latest fashions in wings, garden lace and coloured fairy dust. It worked like a charm. Just about every fairy showed up, even the Tooth Fairy.”

“Now wait a minute,” spoke up Lillian, “I distinctly remember Darwin loosing a tooth about three weeks ago and there seemed to be no problem with the Tooth Fairy showing up.”

“Oh, undoubtedly,” smiled Gladly. “Durwood did get a visit, but it wasn’t from the Tooth Fairy. K.O. made one of his trolls dress-up in wings and garden lace and “do the rounds,” so to speak. I think if you ask your little brother you’ll find that he probably had rather unpleasant experience with the exchange of his tooth for money.”

Lillian paused to think. “You know, you’re right, now that I think about it, Darwin did seem to have a few nights of bad dreams and he showed me the money he got. It was the grubbiest ten-dollar bill I’ve ever seen. I remember thinking “ten bucks, all I ever got was a lousy buck!”

“Ah yes, K.O. was counting on children overcoming their aversion to this new Tooth Fairy with the amount of money he left.”

Solomon finally seemed to come out of his daze. “That little twerp tried to

mooch five bucks off me! And I caught him in the bathroom last week yanking at another loose tooth!”

“Sooo,” Lillian said slowly, “are you saying that K.O. Bolt has all the fairies?”

“He does,” said Gladly, picking at a piece of lint on his jacket, “the Tooth Fairy is back on the job though. K.O. didn’t want too many parents asking questions. But he’s blackmailing her by keeping all the other fairies penned up.”

“But what does this have to do with Darwin, or Solomon or these?” said Lillian, pointing to the papers on the table. She thought for a moment. “And if you’re The Recruiter for that game,” she said slowly, “then you’re working for Mr. Bolt, so why would you help us get Darwin back, if you got him into this in the first place?”

“Yeah,” piped up Solomon, “you’ve got some ‘splaining to do!”

Lillian looked at Solomon with a “what was that” kind of look on her face.

Solomon shrugged. “Street lingo,” he said, looking a little sheepish.

“You’re right, I guess I do have more explaining to do,” sighed Gladly. He took a deep breath. “Marvin was never supposed to have gotten into the game, he’s too young. But the Gnomes thought they were taking you and that is your contract,” he said looking at Solomon and then pointing to the papers on the table. “You see the game has a tracking device in it, like a global positioning device,

every copy of it does. What it does is pinpoint for K.O. where he can get his workers.”

“Workers?” Questioned Lillian. “For what?”

“I know for what,” said Solomon excitedly, “the workers work in the mines, just like in the game and the Gnomes and the Trolls herd them!”

“Almost correct,” said Gladly slowly. “Except the Gnomes and Trolls are captives too and K.O. uses them like a personal little army.”

“Well nothing could be uglier than the Gnomes that were on our neighbours lawn,” said Lillian. “I always thought they were watching me, but thank goodness Mrs. Throttle got rid of them.”

“Your neighbour actually had no idea they were even on her lawn.”

“Oh come on,” said Lillian, rolling her eyes, “I saw Dolores Throttle out gardening the other day; she would have tripped over them!”

“Your neighbour saw what she wanted to see and she wanted to see nice shrubs,” said Gladly as he yawned and leaned back on the couch.

“Impossible,” humphed Lillian.

“No,” said Gladly, “just a little pixie dust over her door.”

“Ha!” Snorted Solomon. “Next you’re going to be telling us there are witches in wardrobes and monsters under beds!”

Gladly looked at Lillian and Solomon and shrugged. “Those are the gnomes

that took your brother and delivered him to the mine.”

“Whoa, now just wait a minute,” said Lillian angrily. “First of all you’re saying that this lunatic Leprechaun took Darwin by mistake and then you try to get us to believe that eighteen inch garden Gnomes carried him off?”

“Yeah,” chimed in Solomon, “that’s just dumb!” Solomon certainly had a way with words.

“Except they’re not garden Gnomes,” said Gladly as he almost put his feet up on the table again. He was discouraged by the glaring look from Lillian.

“Well then what are they,” said Lillian testily.

“Can I finish my story?” shrugged Gladly.

“Make it snappy,” glowered Lillian.

“The Gnomes are captured kids from other villages in the area. If K.O. doesn’t think you’ll be a good worker in the mine, he turns you into a Gnome or a Troll. I think the Troll’s get the worst of it frankly, they have to take care of K.O.’s dragon-dogs.”

“Dragon-dogs, cool,” said Solomon. Lillian glared at him.

“K.O. places the Gnomes near or sometimes right on the front lawn of the kid’s house he is going to recruit. He dusts over the door with pixie dust, waits for the appropriate time and snatches the new recruit, simple as that.”

“So let me get this straight,” said Lillian, somewhat incredulously, “he puts

the Gnomes on kid's lawns that have the game, because he knows where they live and then when he thinks no-one will see them, he what, activates these Gnomes and they cart off another worker?"

"Yep, that's pretty well it, in a nut-shell."

Solomon let out a low whistle. He then looked puzzled. "But what's with this pixie dust?"

"I showed you earlier, when you wouldn't believe me about the game store."

"Sooo," said Lillian slowly, "just what exactly does pixie dust do?"

"Pixie dust makes you see what you think you want to see," explained Gladly.

"Solomon wanted to see what he thought was the guy at the store handing out games. His other friends all saw someone different. Your Mr. Din thought he saw one of his old rock buddies signing autographs and you," Gladly said turning to Lillian, "you saw your mother because that's who you thought you wanted to see."

Lillian's eyes opened wide. "Mrs. Throttle saw nice plants, because that's what she wanted to see! And every time she opened her front door enough pixie dust sprinkled over her to make that happen!"

"Precisely," said Gladly looking a little relieved that Lillian had finally

figured it

out.

“But I’m confused,” mumbled Solomon.

“Duh, you usually are Solomon. What else is new?” Said an exasperated Lillian. “Well miss smarty pants; tell me why we can’t see Darwin, because we want to see him, right?” Taunted Solomon.

“Children, children.” Gladly held up his hand to get them to stop squabbling. “The reason you can’t “see” Darwin is because I haven’t dusted the doorway with pixie dust.”

“Why not?” Lillian said, puzzled.

“Because as much as you need my help, I need yours,” sighed Gladly.

“Our help?” said a surprised Solomon. “But you’re the recruiter what help would you need?”

Lillian and Solomon both stared at Gladly. As they watched him, his amazing jacket began quickly changing colours. Lillian realized that the jacket had been reflecting the bright colours and patterns in the Corrigan living room. Now the jacket was shades of blue and purple. Gone were the flowery chintz patterns, only to be replaced by swirling dark clouds. It was magical to watch. Lillian slowly raised her eyes to look at Gladly’s face. He was watching his jacket too. When he

finally raised his head, Lillian could see that his swaggering confidence had been replaced with a look of consternation.

“Maybe,” said Lillian slowly, “it’s time for you to tell us who you are and what you really want.”

“Badly and Sadly,” said Gladly, sadly, slumping backward on the couch.

Lillian and even Solomon sat quietly, saying nothing. The colours in Gladly’s jacket were slowly becoming lighter. “Well,” said Lillian as she leaned back in the chair, “perhaps it is too bad, so sad, but we’re not going to help you until we find out more.”

“Oh, alright,” Gladly said petulantly. As his jacket got lighter, his confidence seemed to return. “I’ll tell you my story.”

So Gladly Yarble enlightened Lillian and Solomon with the tale of his life. His parents had simply disappeared one day when he was about fifteen years old, which left him to care for his two younger brothers. Being fifteen and a Pixie, for Gladly, the lack of parental supervision meant he’d been handed the keys to freedom; freedom from responsibility, freedom from daily chores and freedom from Pixie Proper School. Suffice to say, Gladly and his brothers were not particularly good students, so the boys ran rampant. They participated in all the supposed typical Pixie behaviour from folk legends and lore. Gladly, Badly and Sadly Yarble stole horses (they did return them the next morning) and hid in trees

and threw things at passers-by (mostly apple-cores, rotten peaches and nuts). They delighted in running through the neighbourhood on wash-day and pulling all of the fresh laundry off clothes-lines. The Yarble boys were incorrigible. One particular day, explained Gladly, his two younger brothers had ventured off on their own. When they returned hours later, they were smirking and giggling. Gladly asked them what they found so funny and they both held up a number of envelope-sized signs with the letters K.O.B. on them. Badly and Sadly thought it was funny that someone would nail “Keep Out Boys” signs in the woods. They told Gladly they’d found them near an old mine. Gladly was furious at his younger brothers, but he was nervous too. He told them that the letters were for K.O. Bolt and that they had to put them back. Badly and Sadly argued with Gladly but finally they agreed to put them back. Gladly never saw his brothers again.

“So now do you understand?” sighed Gladly. “K.O. Bolt took my brothers too, that’s why I need your help.”

“But how or why do you think us helping you will make any difference?” questioned Lillian.

Gladly sighed, “because K.O. has made a mistake. Your little brother Alvin shouldn’t be there. It means he’s getting sloppy or letting the gnomes get sloppy, but it might just give me, er, us, the opportunity to get my brothers and your brother out.”

Solomon and Lillian both looked at each other. Solomon shrugged at Lillian with his “gee this is way too complicated for me, you figure it out” look on his face.

Lillian looked like she was thinking. Her face lit up. She stood up abruptly and grabbed the papers off the table.

“Okay you two, get up and come with me. I know exactly who can help us, all of us!”

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S.Martin Boughtom sat hunched over his computer keyboard. He typed in the last two lines of his report. He had started writing out Coach Dribble’s story by hand, but as the story got more and more complicated, he’d switched over to his computer. His hand had gotten sore from writing.

“So, Coach let me run through this one more time with you, just to make sure I’ve got it right,” said S.Martin as he stretched back in his chair. “This is one of the wildest stories I’ve ever heard!”

Coach Dribble nodded his head in agreement. “I hear you, S. Martin and believe me, earlier this week I thought I was crazy! But then I finally put two and two together and that’s why I came to see you!”

S.Martin scrolled up to the beginning of the document he’d just typed and began reading. “Statement from Coach Dribble, regarding the disappearance of

Henry and Gavin Flatchet,” S. Martin cleared his throat and continued. “On Monday morning Coach Dribble checked in with Mr. and Mrs. Flatchet before they headed out of town for two days to the Lapidary Convention in Tweeville. Coach Dribble was to keep an eye on Gavin and Henry until late Wednesday afternoon when the Flatchet’s returned. He was to check in just before the boys packed it in for the night and make sure they made it out to school on time on Tuesday and Wednesday morning. Coach Dribble noted that the boys were a little late coming home from school on Monday as they’d stopped by the Games Emporium. Is this okay so far Coach?” asked S. Martin.

Coach Dribble nodded his head vigourously, “yep, yep, keep going.” “On Tuesday morning, Coach Dribble arrived at the Flatchet residence around 8:30 am and Gavin and Henry were just heading out the door for school. He reminded the boys about basket-ball practice at the Derry Recreation and Organization Centre at 6:30 pm that night along with their friends Terrance, Solomon and Clancy. He also reminded them to get their homework done and eat the casserole their mother had left in the fridge before they came to practice. Coach Dribble then spent the day at the centre repairing the trampoline. Gavin and Henry failed to show up for practice, actually no-one did, so Coach Dribble headed over the Flatchet home around 7:15 pm. Gavin and Henry weren’t there. Coach Dribble waited until 9:30 pm and assumed that the boys had decided to stay over at a

friend's house for the night.”

S. Martin paused and coughed. Coach Dribble had moved in behind S. Martin and was reading the document on the screen while S. Martin read. Neither one of them heard the small tinkle from the bell above the office door.

“On Wednesday afternoon Coach Dribble returned to the Flatchet residence to see if the boys had shown up. Mr. and Mrs. Flatchet had arrived home and proceeded to thank the Coach for over-seeing Gavin and Henry. The Coach told the Flatchets he just wanted to make sure they were home safe and sound, to which the Flatchets indicated that not only were the boys home but they were studying quietly in their bedroom. The Coach asked if he could say hello to the boys. The Flatchets said by all means and told the Coach to go ahead to the boys' room. When Coach Dribble opened the door to their room he found it empty. The boys' computer was still on and there was a printed document in the printer tray. Coach Dribble knew that had not been there on Tuesday night and thought it unlikely that Mr. or Mrs. Flatchet would print something off their sons' computer. Coach Dribble removed the document from the printer. He then thanked the Flatchets but was puzzled when they again indicated that it was good to see the boys studying so hard.

“Are you sure that the boys weren't just out in the backyard tossing a ball

and you missed them?” said S. Martin, turning to look at the Coach.

“Absolutely”, said the Coach, shaking his head, “because I went back on Thursday morning, just before the Flatchets left for their stone and rock shop, Stoney Henge, and they were thrilled that the boys were still studying before they went to school. But I’m telling ya, S. Martin there was nobody in their room and their beds hadn’t been slept in. It’s just weird.”

“Pixie dust.”

“Bless you,” said Coach Dribble.

“Bless who?” S. Martin turned to face the Coach again.

“Bless you, for sneezing.”

“But I didn’t sneeze,” said S. Martin, looking puzzled.

“I said *pixie dust* and sometimes it does make you sneeze!”

S. Martin and Coach Dribble abruptly turned and jerked back in surprise. Standing on the other side of the desk were two young teens and perhaps the oddest person both S. Martin and the Coach had ever laid eyes on.

“Gladly Yarble, at your service,” said Gladly. He scanned the office, “nice office.” Gladly nodded approvingly; he really meant it. “Oh yeah and this is Tilly and Loman and it sounds like you have a pixie dust problem.”

“Pixie dust?” questioned S. Martin, “but what...no wait a minute, just who are you?” he said pointing at Gladly. “And you, and you?” said S. Martin pointing

to Lillian and Solomon.

Lillian stepped forward and offered her hand to S. Martin. "I'm Lillian Corrigan, Mr. Boughtom and this is my brother Solomon and we think we know what has happened to the Flatchet boys and maybe some of the other boys in town. And this is Gladly Yarble and I think he can help us find all the boys including our baby brother, Darwin."

S.Martin took Lillian's hand and shook it politely. "Corrigan, Corrigan. Yes, don't your parents own Shift Gears Consulting? I think I did some work for them a couple of years ago." He smiled at Lillian. "And you must be Solomon. If I remember correctly the day I was there you and your younger brother decided to see what would happen if you took the top of the blender while it was still running. I don't think your mother was too pleased. You've grown." Said S.Martin. He extended his hand to Solomon, who took it awkwardly.

"Ahem," coughed Gladly, "I thought we were concerned about pixie dust, not blenders!"

Coach Dribble just stared. He looked back and forth from Lillian, to Solomon and then to Gladly. He didn't know what to say.

"You're absolutely right Mr. Yarble. I'm S. Martin Boughtom and it sounds like you can help us," said S. Martin, extending his hand.

"Smartin' bottom?" sniggered Gladly, "that's certainly a very funny name."

He snorted and laughed again, “Smartin’ Bottom! Too funny!”

Lillian could see that Solomon was stifling a laugh. She gave him a quick jab with her elbow.

S. Martin just stood there. He took in a deep breath and let it out slowly and nodded his head. “You know Mr. Yarble, you’re right. I kept the initial for sentimental reasons. My dear departed mother thought it sounded distinguished and it was a bit of a family tradition, but I think for years people have been laughing at me behind my back. You at least had the courage to laugh in my face.” He sat down behind his desk. “So much about my life has changed in the last little while that I might as well change my name too. So from now on, it’s just Martin, plain simple Martin. Now Mr. Yarble, let’s hear your story.”

“Call me Gladly, Marty,” said Gladly as he plunked himself down in the chair beside Martin and proceeded to tell him about K.O. Bolt, the gnomes, the mine and of course the pixie dust.

Martin made copious notes while Gladly told his story and then read out the summary of Coach Dribble’s story to Lillian, Solomon and Gladly. They were all so engrossed with listening to each other’s stories that no-one noticed the front door open slightly and then close. It hadn’t even opened enough to ring the small bell over the front door of the Fairy Inspection Agency.

“Hellooo,” said a small voice.

“Ahhh,” shouted a startled Lillian, Solomon, Martin, Coach Dribble and Gladly. They all looked towards the door, but no-one was there.

“Ahem,” said the small voice.

Lillian, Solomon, Martin, Coach Dribble and Gladly looked down, way down. Standing at the corner of Martin’s desk was the smallest person any of them had ever laid eyes on. Perhaps it was Martin’s massive desk that made this small person seem even smaller, but there was no doubt he was tiny.

“I saw the sign.” His voice was tinkly, like high-toned wind-chimes. He looked around the office with obvious nods of approval, just like Gladly had.

Martin recovered his wits first. “May we help you, Mister...?”

“Stinknose Dewberry, PHD and FPC; I’m delighted to make your acquaintance.” He extended his small hand to Martin who delicately shook it. Stinknose Dewberrys’ voice was mesmerizing. The light, tinkling quality was like the best summer day when the air smelled fresh, the sky was a brilliant colour of blue and except for the occasional bird-chirp or bee-buzz the stillness was enthralling.

Lillian finally said something. “So you have a doctorate in what and you’re a financial planning consultant too, Mr. Dewberry?”

Stinknose Dewberry looked puzzled for a moment and then giggled. “It stands for Pixie Hijinx Detective and Fairy Policy Coordinator,” he reached into

his pocket and handed Lillian a small card, pink on one side and blue on the other.

“And please, call me Stink.”