

The Gruff Mountain Man and the Water Fairy

written by

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Jelly
Gruff
Tiffla
Sarla
Jax
Fishtail
Bird
Fairy Mother

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EXT. BY THE POND - DAY

On a rock sits JELLY (12) female fairy, a jellyfish for a hat and shells strung around her waist. She has the standard wings and pointy ears that all fairies have.

FISHTAIL (14) male fairy, algae trousers, stands nearby.

FISHTAIL

(taunting)

Jelly can't run, Jelly can't walk.
All she does is talk, talk, talk!

Fishtail gets pelted with a rock. Jelly holds up another rock. Fishtail runs away.

INT. CONCH SEASHELL HOUSE - DAY

SARLA (38) female fairy, shell necklace and pearls, gives Jelly, who is sitting at the table, the LEATHER SHOES.

CUT TO:

Jelly, wearing the shoes, wobbles a step. HUGE smile.

EXT. CLEAN TRENDY BUSTLING FAIRY MARKETPLACE - DAY

Stalls made of makeshift forest materials and lost camping supplies: twigs, leaves, hair ties, batteries, pieces of duct tape, Ziplock bags, cigarette buds, etc.

Jelly passes a rack of folded candy-wrapper hats. A fairy with goggles is chipping away at bottle glass pieces. Three female business fairies are trying on different petal-made dress suits. A basket full of berries and bugs carried by a plump old fairy ambles by. A kid is pulling up the pebbles lining the street. His mother smacks him with a bobby pin. He stops. She turns to the stall owner.

FAIRY MOTHER

How much for this?

INT. CONCH SEASHELL HOUSE - FLASHBACK - DAY

Jelly is holding a PACKAGE wrapped in dried baby wipes.

JELLY

Don't worry-it's not far-I'll be
extra careful. I just have to thank
him-it's like what Pa always said,
"Give thanks where thanks is due."

SARLA

(Sadly)

You're a good girl. Be safe.

Sarla kisses Jelly's forehead. She waves. Jelly leaves.

EXT. FAIRY MARKET TIFFLA'S STALL - DAY

Jelly listens to TIFFLA (55) female, olive skin, swirling designs on her face and arms, dressed in flowers, standing behind a stall of seeds and berries.

TIFFLA

Oh yeah, we cursed him like all the other humans. But then we thought, "Oh, he's not as mean as he looks" cause of his shoemaking and such.

Jelly rocks back and forth in her WORN LEATHER SHOES with itty-bitty buttons.

TIFFLA (CONT'D)

And the village elders, they tried to break his curse. He told them to "buzz off". I think he likes living here.

Jelly starts jumping up and down.

JELLY

Do you know where he is? I have a gift, see- for him-It's a special thank you gift-for his kindness-I made it myself. Well, kind of, Ma helped.

A shrunken fairy-sized GRUFF (60) black, beard with flecks of white, mountain man, he's got rolls of leather tied to his back and walks with a slight limp. He stops at Tiffla's stall and grabs some of the stall's goods.

JELLY (CONT'D)

See, I couldn't ever walk-sensitive feet-I only ever swam or flew-but then my ma-we live by the ponds-she traded for a pair of shoes-from a prairie fairy-and now I can walk-I walked all the way here, see. I've just gotta meet him.

TIFFLA

Well aren't you lucky. Hi Gruff, how's our favorite human today?

GRUFF
You telling lies about me again?

TIFFLA
Only the truth.

Gruff glares at her.

GRUFF
Even worse.

Gruff gives Tiffla some small nuts and walks away.

Dropped jaw, Jelly is motionless.

TIFFLA
Well, you going to talk to him?
He's getting away.

JELLY
That's him? He's... not-but can I?-
He's got to be so busy and I...

She looks down at the package in her hands.

TIFFLA
Just go. Don't worry about it.

Jelly smiles and nods. She chases after Gruff.

EXT. FAIRY MARKETPLACE STREET - CONTINUOUS

JAX (10) and BIRD (9) boy fairies, leafy tunics, are playing with rocks along the side of the road. They see Gruff.

JAX
Look, it's Gruff.
(mocking to Gruff)
Gruff and Tiffla sitting in a tree.
K-I-S-S-I-N-G!

GRUFF
Shut yer yaps or I'll burry you in
mud.

Bird giggles. Jax sneers.

JAX
Well I'll shave your beard and
burry it in a dung beetle's home.

GRUFF

I'll take your wings and feed them
to lions.

JAX

You only say that cause you're a
crusty old fart that smells like
ogre poops!

GRUFF

What do you know about ogre poops?
Unless you are one.

BIRD

OOOOOOOOOOHHHHH!!!

Bird doubles over laughing. Jax stifles a smile then sticks
out his tongue. Gruff snickers and continues down the road.

JELLY

You can't talk to him like that-
with no respect-don't you know what
he's done for the fairy community-
don't you know what it's like to be
an outsider-to be different from
everyone-just because he's human!

JAX

He's just old Gruff.

JELLY

He makes shoes! See!

Jelly puts her foot in Jax's face.

JAX

Alright.
(mumbles)
Wacko.

Jax leaves and Bird follows, angrily sizing Jelly up and
down. Jelly runs after Gruff.

JELLY

You can't let them talk to you like
that. You're a good human.

GRUFF

They can talk how they want to
talk. And I'm no good anything.
Whoever told you that is crazy in
the head.

JELLY

You can't say that about yourself.

GRUFF

Sure I can.

JELLY

But you're not-you, you choose to live with fairies.

GRUFF

Eh, humans are a pain. I picked the lesser of two evils.

JELLY

You made me my shoes...

GRUFF

I make shoes to pass the time. There's nothing special about it. They're just shoes.

JELLY

Oh.

Jelly's posture drops. Gruff stops and sighs.

GRUFF

Taking things so seriously as you do just isn't going to do you good.

JELLY

But it's not right. Just cause you're different doesn't mean you should be treated different-you belong here.

GRUFF

Says who? Maybe I like it this way and maybe I don't want it changed.

Gruff shrugs and continues walking. Jelly bites her lip and sniffs back tears. She looks down at the PACKAGE in her hands.

EXT. FAIRY MARKET TIFFLA'S STALL - DAY

Jelly flitters to the stall and holds up her shoes.

JELLY

What can I trade for these?

TIFFLA

What? Now why are you trading those?

Jelly looks at the ground.

TIFFLA (CONT'D)

Did you give him your gift?

JELLY

No.

TIFFLA

(rolls eyes)

Oh my. Fooled you, didn't he.

JELLY

He wouldn't want my gift.

TIFFLA

If you like your shoes then go like your shoes. If you want to give him a gift, go give him a gift. He gives you attitude? Who cares!? You want to appreciate him? Do it.

Jelly shrugs. Tiffila grabs her arm.

TIFFLA (CONT'D)

Now listen here. He's got one of them golden hearts but he hides it. Doesn't like the attention I think. Now you go give him that gift whether he wants it or not.

Jelly sighs.

JELLY

Alright.

EXT. GRUFF'S ABANDONED-MICROWAVE MAKESHIFT HOUSE - DAY

Gruff finishes a stitch on a shoe. Thread cut. Knock knock. Gruff gets up, waddles to his door, opens it. In extended hands, Jelly is bowing and holding out the gift. Gruff looks around a bit then clears his throat.

GRUFF

Ah, I guess, you could leave it on my table. But you'd be wasting it on me. I'll probably throw it away.

Jelly pops up, barges in, and puts it on the table.

JELLY
(rudely)
It's a thank you gift-for your
wonderful shoes.

Gruff picks up the finished pair of shoes. He hands them to Jelly.

GRUFF
Take these useless things with you.
I don't need them lying around
collecting dust.

Jelly holds the FISH SCALED shoes.

JELLY
Are these fish scales?-Are these
water shoes?!

GRUFF
(Sternly)
No.
(beat)
But you can swim in them.
And they'll dry quickly.

Jelly gives Gruff a hug then runs out. Just a second later she turns back and peeks through his window.

Gruff opens the package to reveal a repurposed travel size hand sanitizer tube turned into a lava lamp with fluorescent moss. He SMILES widely, picks it up. The moss dances.

Jelly SQUEALS in delight.

GRUFF (CONT'D)
Get out of here or I'll pinch the
point of your ears off!

Jelly starts running away.

JELLY
(laughing)
You're a horrible old man!

GRUFF
And don't you forget it!

END.