

**The Woman Who Believed in Fairies**  
by Jeanne Gulbranson

I don't remember when it went from cute to fucking nuts—but man, it sure got there fast!

When Sheila and I started going out, I didn't think this whole fairy thing of hers was any big deal. Yeah, I saw the fairy pictures and statues all over her apartment and the books about fairies sitting on her coffee table, but lots of girls get hung up on something and buy too much of it. Like that crazy Carole I used to date—she must have had three hundred pairs of shoes! So like I said, I didn't think too much about Sheila's fairies. And to tell the truth, it was easier on me, and a helluva lot cheaper, to buy fairies for Sheila than it was to buy those damn expensive shoes for Carole! Fairies are every-fucking-where—every Hallmark store, drugstore, the outdoor kiosks downtown. I never knew there were so many fairies around 'til I met Sheila.

For awhile, I bought the hell out of those things. I learned real young that “*you want a piece of ass—you bring a piece of...something.*” That's why I had to break up with Carole. That nutcase gave me a list of shoes that she wanted me to buy: Jimmy Choo and Christian Some-French-Name and that other Manolo guy. It's not like I didn't try—but come on! Eight hundred bucks for one pair of shoes? Not on a cop's salary! I got the hell away from that crazy bitch! At least Sheila's fairies were cheap.

It was all good with me and Sheila and the fairies until she moved in with me and brought all the damn fairies into my condo. More and more fairies—they just kept coming out of the packing boxes. She must have stored some of them in a closet at her place, but she figured my condo had lots more room, so out they came. I ended up having to put shelves all across one wall in the dining room just to have some place to sit them all. Sheila right away started calling the dining room “Fairy Land.” You know. Like the land of the fairies? Okay, I didn't give a

shit. I figured if they all just stayed in the dining room, at least I wouldn't trip over them anywhere else.

Well, that didn't last long. In just a couple of months, the shelves were full, and fairies started showing up everywhere—on top of the TV, hanging from the ceiling fans, sitting on the kitchen counters. Sheila spent her whole paychecks on fairies! Yeah, she tried to deny it, but she stopped chipping in for groceries, and when I'd give her money to go buy something I needed—maybe socks or something—she'd buy the cheapest crap she could find and then another damn fairy would show up.

I did get her to at least leave the fairies in the condo after she pulled that deal with my patrol car. My partner and I had just started our shift cruising the streets, when he reached into the glove box looking for some napkins. He pulled out this big-ass fairy—bigger than his hand! It was wearing a police cap and a badge. Jesus Christ! Man, did he ever get a laugh out of that! So did everyone at the station when he brought it in and passed it around. I mean, lots of the Catholic guys hang medals in their cars with St. Somebody on it, but a fairy? I looked like a damn fool! I dumped that cop fairy in a trash bin on my way home—a little treat for the dumpster divers. I told Sheila that my partner ran over the fairy—that I tried to stop him, but he wouldn't listen. She said that if my partner couldn't show any more respect than that, then maybe she shouldn't let him near any more fairies. Yeah, Sheila. Good idea.

I stopped buying fairies for Sheila after we had a big blowout when I was just trying to be a nice guy. That morning before I left for work, I told her she had too many fairies and I was tired of moving them off the end table just so I could put a bag of chips out. Sheila started bawling and I can't stand that crying shit, so I wanted to make it up to her. Some guy on the street was selling fairies, and I bought one of them just before I busted him for selling without a

license. But when I gave it to her, Sheila got all pissy with me. She started hollering, “That’s what’s wrong with our relationship! You don’t pay any attention to me! You don’t even know the difference between a fairy and a troll! Get that evil thing out of here!”

Shit! Okay, so I knew it was ugly, but some of the things she was bringing home weren’t that great looking either. I thought, “Fine, you don’t like what I pick—you’re getting nothing out of me!” I don’t know why I was still buying her those damn things anyway. It’s not like I had to keep bargaining my way into more sex. Hell, she was living in my condo.

Sheila’s fairy hang-up went way over the top when she met the “Fairy Mother”: some whack job she ran into at a craft fair. This Fairy Mother makes fairies out of little plastic dolls that she decorates with feathers and twigs and glitter and all kinds of shit, and she puts each one of them in its own canning jar. She gives all of them names like “The Thorny Cactus Fairy” and “The Couch Potato Fairy” and writes out these descriptions about how they act and how to take care of them. Every one of those damn things cost about thirty dollars, and Sheila was running over to the Fairy Mother’s place every week to buy more of them! I finally told Sheila, “That Fairy Motherfucker sure saw you coming! What do you do—just back into her place bent over?” Sheila didn’t talk to me for three days after that. But she didn’t stop buying the fairies either.

The Fairy Mother even punches holes in the top of each jar so “they can breathe.” Sheila laid into me one night when I put my hand over the top to move one of these ugly-ass jars out of my way. “What are you doing?” she screamed. “You’re covering her air holes! She can’t breathe!” Like I’m telling you—she’d gone nuts! But I don’t know who was the craziest: the Fairy Motherfucker or Sheila—or me—for letting this go on.

Actually, I knew Sheila was the crazy one, and she was getting nuttier by the day. I started hearing her talking to the damn things at night when I was watching TV, and then she’d

say good-night to every one of them before she came to bed. Jesus! That took like an hour. Sometimes I was out of the mood by the time she got upstairs! I started thinking about how to get Sheila and her fairies out of my life.

So last night, I was really late because of a liquor store break-in right before my shift was supposed to end. I knew Sheila would be asleep, so I tried to be quiet, but then I tripped over a big, empty cardboard box with a torn tag that read *IKEA Billy Bookcase \$69.99*. She'd brought another damn bookcase into my condo for more fairies? Yep. There it was—all put together in the living room and almost all filled up with fairy jars. I thought, "Okay, bitch. You're bugging me? I'm going to do you one back."

I picked up the newspaper that Sheila had left spread out on the kitchen table and put the pages over the tops of all the jars. Yeah, I figured, this should freak her out and let her know what I think about her fairies.

The next morning, I was just rolling out of bed when I heard the screaming. I grabbed my gun and ran downstairs, figuring that someone had broken in and Sheila surprised him. No. Sheila was lying on the living room floor crying hysterically. I tried to pull her up, but it was like she didn't even have any bones. She just keep screaming and crying and pointing to the bookcase. I looked up, but then I had to walk over to make sure of what I was seeing.

All the fairies were lying in the bottom of their jars. Their eyes were closed. Well, I'll be damned. The fuckers died.