

Meaghan Marina

Fairy Timing

Loud wails of pain filled the air as Hazel made her way home with dinner. Unknowingly, her body was inching closer to the atrocity that lay before her: a morbid curiosity, at the almost artistic yet devastating actions, clawed its way through her brain. Paling limbs splayed underneath a writhing mass of violent winged beings, blood pooling on the street. Of course she'd stumbled onto feasting fairies. A rustling sound chimed through the air. Vibrant purple, silver and gold eyes drilled into her face. A sinking feeling struck Hazel, and when she looked at her feet, the bag of groceries she previously held were sprawled along the concrete ground.

Sharp hisses shrieked in her ears as she stared at the gang before her — long twisted pointed ears swivelling a warning behind their heads; long sharp blue claws dripping with deep red aimed at her. Even the wings at their backs, once beautiful and delicate, held a new monstrosity as the weight of the fairies' anger hit her, due the disruption she caused during their meal.

“Uh... fancy seeing you here!” she gulped, slowly retreating with her hands out in front of her. Panic was causing her legs to tremble, making steps feel impossible. Great, of all times to lose bodily functions: it was when she faced extreme danger. Out of everything, she didn't want the predatory gazes on her to know how scared she was facing a real fairy gang. “I will be leaving now. Later!”

Without another moment to lose, she spun swiftly on her heels and bolted back through the alleyway she had been taking home. A hazy memory of a police station not too far off from her appeared in her mind: she would go there. They would be able to help her there, surely. Following her path were whoops of excitement. She didn't know what scared her more: being

chased by a fairy gang, or being hunted by a fairy gang. Both were extremely terrifying possibilities that she would love to cry about.

As she was running, the sidewalk she approached fizzed out of existence for a moment, before returning back to normal. Hazel blinked hard, but all was as it should be in the world. She sprinted across the street and raced along buildings that seemed to twist far over her head, spinning in the sky towards her, as the police station on 47th came into view.

Lack of oxygen forced her breath to heave out of her, and she risked a glance behind her as blood cramped the side of her body. No one was behind her. She slowed to a stop, confused where all the fairies went. Sometime during the chase they fell off. This didn't bode well with her — she didn't know if anything she was seeing was true.

Hazel turned around to face the glowing blue letters of 'Police', which never looked more appealing to her. Walking through the automatic doors, she felt as if she could let out a sigh of relief — she was safe. Phone calls tumbled over long winded but patient discussions with citizens, all of which buzzed in her ears. The normalcy soothed her heartbeat, and soon she felt calm enough to speak to someone. A couple of cops threw a glance her way, but she focused her attention on the officer right beside the door. Designated as a receptionist for the police department, he looked like he had dealt with a lot of requests from people walking into the station before, and offered her a brief smile.

"Just a moment Miss," he said to her. J. Palmer was etched on his name tag, a heavy moustache sitting on his lips. Hazel shook her head. She couldn't wait a couple of minutes.

"Got an ambulance on speed dial?" she asked.

Officer J. Palmer raised his eyebrow for a moment, pausing the work he had been pre-occupied with. "Is there someone in the neighbourhood lost, injured, suffering with amnesia,

or on the rare chance someone wandered onto fae turf?” he droned on, each word drawn out with little enunciation.

“A mass of fairies were eating a guy! Call an ambulance, quick!” she said with urgency. It was almost like he was taking his time because she was all alone.

There was a look of perplexity on his face, as if he didn't believe what she was saying. A simple smack of his lips and his attention turned back to his computer. Keys clacked alongside the rustle of reports being filed around the station. Impatience was Hazel's heart with every tick of time slipping away, encouraged by the increasing speed of her foot tapping.

Hazel's eyes drifted around the station. Laughter and conversations filled the air full of officers' camaraderie. Officer Palmer turned away to talk with a colleague behind him, ignoring Hazel's presence. She walked up to the counter of the reception and pressed her forearms against it. He didn't turn around, not even when she dinged the bell perched on the counter, along with hand sanitizer and a floral desk fan.

“Seriously, you're just going to sit there?” she said. There must have been a big frown on her face when Officer Palmer glanced back at her, purple swirling in his eyes for a moment. He went back to talking with his friend. Suddenly she felt put aside.

The walls span around her in a shark-like fashion, caging her in discomfort. A feeling of eyes hungrily staring at her made standing there a dizzying effort. Pictures and paintings on the walls around her seemed to almost reach out to touch her, but if that was her anxiety, she couldn't tell. There were more police in this station than she had ever seen before. It shocked her just how many men and women were on the force in this city. More than enough people to help her, to help those who were in desperate need of protection from the violence of fairy gangs. A clock on the far wall slowly ticked away. Seconds, turning into minutes. Time was wasting away

and soon no one would be able to help the man receiving the worst beating of his life, unaware what was real and what was simply a forced mirage in his mind. He was wasting time that could be used to save the man dying on the street.

“Can’t you just call an ambulance for me?” blood was boiling in her gut as Officer Palmer barely gave her any attention. “You’d rather make conversation than help a citizen you are paid to protect?”

“At this time we are not processing any requests,” said Officer Palmer, finally facing her. In the corner of her eye, officers were lounging and chatting with each other amiably. He didn’t look the slightest bit uncomfortable refusing service, his eyes flashing a deep purple for another moment. “Do you have any evidence?”

“No, but—”

“Sorry, no can do for you little lady,” he turned back to his computer, clacking away at the keys and chuckling to himself at whatever was on the screen.

“What, little lady? Are you serious?” Hazel clenched her fists tightly as if it would ebb the frustration that flowed through her body. A poor soul was suffering, and they were here ignoring the world around them — useless. “Guess it’s up to me again. Duty never rests.”

Frustration was ingrained in her from their lack of action as she turned around to leave. When she walked out the door, she could just hear Officer Palmer say to his coworker. “The little birdie has fallen into the web”.

As the doors closed behind her, she turned again to face the station only to see a wavy wall of thorns twist and bend towards her face. Gold and purple lights waved its way through the air, bringing a mirage of dust sprinkling the skies in shimmers. Confusion flew through her head. She thought she was at the police station.

A whooshing sound evolved into high pitch hisses that pained her ears, her hands immediately covering them to no avail. There were deep chuckles that followed with the piercing hisses that reverberated off of the realm around her. A tip of a knife — no, a nail, slowly dragged around her back and she twisted to face it. Nothing.

At her neck, a puff of air gently caressed her, before the feeling of her feet being encased in warmth caught her attention. Hazel looked down, and it appeared her legs were sinking into the earth. Her feet now invisible, all the while heat travelled up her body. Everything burned as a sharp pain tore through Hazel's neck. And she fell away.