

The Wand of Happy Fluffyness



"I am sad!" said Gnippy the Gnome. He said it loudly because it was extra-true. "I have been sad all day!" continued Gnippy, "And yesterday too! And the day before, and the day before that!"

Of course, nobody was listening, which was part of why Gnippy was sad. If somebody had been there to listen, he might have been less sad. But that depends on who it was. He also might have been more sad. Or angry. Or hungry. All in all, it was probably for the best that nobody was there listening to Gnippy, because then there would have been somebody there to stop him. Or at least talk him out of it. Or at least be the first to get clobbered with the Wand of Happy Fluffyness. Ah, but we are getting ahead of the story, aren't we?

"I am sad, and also bored." said Gnippy. "If I was less bored, perhaps I would be less sad." he said. And so, being both sad and bored, but mostly sad, he broke a branch off of a nearby Brickle bush, and flailed it about in the air. This no doubt made the Brickle bush less happy than it had been a moment before, but it had little immediate effect on Gnippy's sadness. Gnippy's heart was filled with woe and woo, and it takes more than a little flailing of Brickle branches to ward off such heavy humors of the soul as woe and woo, no matter how artfully the flailing might be done.

"Yawn" said Gnippy, unceasing in his Brickle-flailing. The branch was just not doing the trick. Gnippy looked around for something he could pummel with the stick. Pummeling was better than flailing any day of the week. But there was nothing in arm's reach except the Brickle bush, and even our little Gnippy in his unhappy state of mind could see that beating the poor bush senseless with its own broken branch would be a bit, well, Bad. And Gnippy certainly wasn't a Bad Gnome. Not as far as Gnomes go anyway.

So Gnippy set out to find something that wouldn't be wounded by bitter irony if beaten with a Brickle branch. And the first thing Gnippy found was a butterfly.

But Gnippy was TERRIFIED of butterflies, so he ran in the other direction for awhile, until he found a Volkswagon Bus. It had a great big butterfly painted on the side, but Gnippy knew it was not real, and he was more than a little shamed at having fled the real butterfly so readily, so he marched right up to the Bus and gave it a good solid thrashing with his Brickle branch.

The Bus didn't budge. Gnippy thought about it for awhile, and decided that although he was still sad, he was feeling considerably less bored, so in spite of his failure to get a reaction out of the Bus on the first go, he had a go at it again.

But the Bus did not get mad, no, not even a little bit. A big thing like a Volkswagon Bus called for something sterner than a stick. It called for MAGIC.

"Gnippy, Pippy, Poodoopoo!" said Gnippy, speaking the magic words that he made up on the spot, and, and with a loud de-brickling noise, the Brickle branch was transformed into a Wand of Happy Fluffyness (or rather, we shall say, THE Wand of Happy Fluffyness, for Gnippy had never made one before, and has never made one since)

You see, Gnomes are most unique creatures, in that they simply have lumps and gobs of magic, but that they are also magic-proof. If he was a Pixie he could have used his magic to make himself happy, and banished his woe and woo in a puff of mirth and glee and giddyness (and indeed, this is what Pixies often do, which goes far in explaining their reputation.) But being a Gnome, Gnippy's magic wouldn't work on Gnippy, but it was still worthwhile for things like making Wands of Happy Fluffyness, if you consider such things to be worthwhile.

"Haha!" said Gnippy, "Now we are getting somewheres!" and he proceeded to pummel the Volkswagon Bus with the Wand of Happy Fluffyness.

With a little jump and a satisfying "Whump", the Bus abruptly became considerably more happy and fluffy. The happiness of course was subjective, such things being hard to judge from the visage of a Volkswagon, but the fluffyness was undeniable. The Bus was covered in shaggy yellow fluffyness from the top of its head to the tips of its tires. There was a pink patch where the butterfly had been, but it was so fluffy one could hardly tell what it was. Gnippy was pleased, and he tucked the Wand of Happy Fluffyness under his arm so that he could celebrate by sticking his thumbs in his ears and rocking to and fro while making funny faces.

And then things started to go wrong. From inside the Bus began a ferocious racket. A Dog that had been slumbering within had woken up, and was now barking with all its might, for it smelled Gnippy and it sensed the magic of his Wand of Happy Fluffyness.

Gnippy staggered and spun in a circle uncertain of what to do or which way to run, and before he could make up his mind how to panic properly, the Dog had leaped out of the happy fluffy Volkswagon's open passenger window.

"EEEEEEEE!" screamed Gnippy in terror, as he flailed his arm at the Dog,

but he flailed in vain, for the Wand of Happy Fluffyness was not in his palm, but tucked under his elbow, so that flailing only caused the Wand to fall to his feet. In an instant the Dog was upon him, bowling him over, head over heels, and worrying him in its jaws like a rag.

Being clutched and shaken between the clenched teeth of an angry canine did Gnippy no good at all, and he squealed all the more with fright and alarm and dismay, but not, I am glad to say, with pain, for Gnomes have thick skin, and it would take a very determined dog indeed to do him grievous harm.

As luck would have it— luck for Gnippy that is, not luck for the Dog— Gnippy's hand fell upon the Wand of Happy Fluffyness where it lay in the dust, and in an instant he was flogging the Dog as ferociously as he himself was being shaken by the same.

Some will argue that all dogs are naturally happy and fluffy, but as dogs go, this particular Dog was far more scruffy than fluffy, and its present temperament betrayed nothing of happy hoppings and waggings of tail. Nevertheless, as soon as Gnippy had let fly with the Wand of Happy Fluffyness, the Dog abruptly became remarkably fluffy, so fluffy in fact that it was hard to tell where Dog ended and fluff began. Unfortunately for Gnippy, the behavior of a happy dog worrying a toy is not so very different from the behavior of an angry dog worrying a hapless Gnome, so his dire condition was not immediately improved. Undaunted, he continued to beat the Dog with the Wand until the Dog was so fluffy that it could not even move, and it was forced to spit him out.

Bruised and dizzy, Gnippy fled from the Dog, now an immobile mass of barking fluff half again as big as the Bus. As he ran, Gnippy wanded everything in his path, merely out of fear that it might chance to bite him. Tree, Stone, Bush, Log, were smitten and rendered happy and fluffy. For many long moments, Gnippy cut a swath of fluffy happiness across the tranquil forest.

Had Gnippy not been dashing madly, he might have taken greater care, and perchance he might not have blundered onto the highway.

"BEEEEEEEEEEEEEP" said the Truck.

"Eeeek!" Squeaked Gnippy, and defended himself the only way he knew how, by smacking the onrushing two tons of steel with the Wand of Happy Fluffyness.

Perhaps the ensuing burst of fluffyness cushioned the blow, for he bounced from the bumper of the truck, and tumbled twenty meters, and landed in a heap with no broken bones.

The next thing Gnippy knew, he was staring up into the sky, with three faces floating over him.

"Look! Look! He's moving!" said the big man.

"Oh thank goodness!" exclaimed the woman. "Can you hear us little fellow? Are you all right?"

"I'm so glad I didn't kill him!" said the small man, with a tear in his eye. "He just darted out there in front of my truck, right before..." and the man glanced over his shoulder with consternation clear in his face, "... right before my radiator grill turned into a shag carpet..."

"What a strange looking little child he is!" said the woman.

"Yes, I'll admit I have never seen a beard on a kid so young." said the small man. "Can you talk, little guy?"

"I do believe he's an escaped Circus Midget, I do." said the big man.

"And what's this peculiar stick he is holding?" asked the woman, and saying this, she tried to pry the Wand of Happy Fluffyness from his fingers.

This was a mistake.

Paf! POF! Poof! and with three quick blows, the three good Samaritans were each as fluffy as a sasquatch, and Gnippy was up and away and into the cab of the idling fluffy-fronted truck which had so recently sent him spinning.

As you may recall, sadness and boredness had started Gnippy on his way, and happiness and fluffyness had kept him going, but now only anger filled his Gnomish mind, and he resolved then and there to Destroy the World in an apocalypse of unstoppable Happy Fluffyness.

"Beep! Beep!" shouted Gnippy, and pressed his palm against the horn (for that was the only part of the truck that Gnippy knew how to use.)

"Go, Go! Truck, Truck! Take me EVERYWHERE! All will taste the sting of my Wand of Happy Fluffyness!"

But the truck did nothing.

"Bad Truck, Bad Truck! Do not disobey!" and Gnippy beat the truck about the steering wheel with the Wand of Happy Fluffyness. "Go! Go! Go! Go!" he shrilled.

The inside of the truck got fluffier, but it did not go.

Again, Gnippy flailed the truck, inducing deeper and deeper fluffyness. "I demand you, command, you, Go! Go! Go! Take me everywhere! The world will tremble before my Wand of Happy Fluffyness!!"

But the truck did not listen.

At that moment, Gnippy noticed something he had not noticed before, and he drew a breath and let it out. The three people who he had Happed and Fluffed did not look happy at all. They were indeed quite fluffy all of them, but the fluffyness itself seemed to be upsetting them, and putting their happiness at naught.

For a long while, Gnippy watched them run about and scream and claw at their fluffy faces. Fluffyness, he realized, was an easy thing to Magic. After all, what more is fluffyness than millions upon millions of tiny strands of sturdy protein structure, each extruding from a living follicle? But happiness is a trickier thing to tackle. What was happiness made of? Gnippy didn't know. The people were fluffy, but they weren't happy. It takes more than a flick of a magic Brickle

branch to bring happiness to a person or a dog or a Volkswagon. The Wand of Happy Fluffyness had never really been a Wand of Happy Fluffyness at all. It was nothing more than a Wand of Fluffyness. Gnippy flipped the Wand end for end, and cracked it in two over his knee. Everything that he had fluffed became unfluffy again.

Gnippy hastily leapt from the Truck's window, and wandered back to the forest edge. He was still bored, but now his woe and woo were so small that he could hardly say he was sad at all. He had learned a lot about Fluffyness that day, and a little about Happiness too.

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