



*The Story Club*

*tiny tales of wonder & whimsy*

*by*  
Elizabeth Halt

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# *the silver & turquoise wand*

Once upon a time, in a land far far away, on a very ordinary day much like this one, a baby was born.

When the midwife held up the baby, the mother gasped, because she saw a silver and turquoise wand grasped tightly between the fingers of the baby's right hand.

The wand was a symbol of wizardry. It meant that the baby was a wizard, with a wizard's powers.

I don't know what wizardry is like in your world, but in this world, it was full of goodness. It imbued the wizard with the power of beauty & magic & possibility & wonder & play, along with the power to make the heart's fondest wishes come true. Sometimes the wishes came true in likely ways; sometimes they came true in unlikely ways; but they always always came true.

There was a time when all the babies in that land were born with wands between their fingers - the colors varied but there was always a wand - but one day, it stopped, and no one ever knew why.

(I've read books and books about their history and I have my suspicions. A ship landed at their port for refueling and the people on the ship laughed at the native people with their wands. "Wands and play are for children," they said, as they laughed and pointed and took pictures to show their friends and family. "You're too old to still be playing." It was shortly after that that some of the people began to forget about their wands, and shortly after that that the first baby was born without a wand between its fingers.)

Without their wands, life was dreary indeed. Slowly, the people forgot about the power of beauty & magic & possibility & wonder & play. They forgot about their power to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. They even forgot that there was such a thing as extraordinary at all.

And then, on that perfectly ordinary day, the baby with the silver and turquoise wand was born, and a spark was lit in everyone's heart.

For in truth, the wand had nothing to do with their powers; it was just a reminder that they existed.

*The end.*

# *the puppy's dream*

Once upon a time, in a magical land known as Oregon, there lived a very large puppy.

This particular puppy was full of sweetness; he made friends wherever he went. He was also very full of energy; he was nine years old and he still ran circles around his favorite person.

One winter day, the puppy was racing down a trail when he slipped on a patch of mud and hurt his paw. He limped all the way back to the car.

The vet said that his paw was broken. She put a giant bandage on it. She told the puppy that he needed to lie on the couch for two months so his paw would heal; there would be no more walking or hiking or running for a very long time.

The puppy missed the woods and the trees and the grass so much. He tried sitting by the door and whining to go outside. It didn't work. No one took him for a walk.

One day, while lying in front of the door in the hope that someone would open it, he fell asleep.

The next thing he knew, he was watching his bandage unroll itself and transform into a set of wings. The wings flew up into the air and attached themselves to his shoulders. He felt them flap to and fro and to and fro, picking up speed as they went.

Before the puppy could even bark with astonishment, he was flying!

He flew up the stairs, out the open bedroom window, and continued on through the neighborhood.

He saw a squirrel tease a dog and run up a tree. He flew up behind the squirrel and said, "Woof!" The squirrel's eyes grew wide and it almost fell off its branch. The puppy barked and barked with delight.

As he flew on, he paused next to every window with a cat on it. He said hello and introduced himself and explained where he lived, just in case they got outside one day and wanted to visit.

When he finished exploring the neighborhood, he flew over to his favorite trail. He flew up and down the trail, smelling all the smells and watching all the people and their dogs.

The puppy had so much fun. He could fly faster and farther than he could run. The entire trail and all the woods around it were his to explore.

Finally - tired and happy - the puppy flew home again. He flew through the window, down the stairs, and collapsed on the floor by the door.

All of a sudden, he jolted awake and saw the bandage still on his paw.

"Noooo!" he thought. "It was real! I wasn't asleep! It wasn't a dream!"

Who knows? Maybe he was right. Because there, on his right front paw, was a pine needle.

The puppy had many more weeks of quiet but he was never quite as sad again. He had lots of time to remember and relive his magical glorious day of flight.

*The end.*

# *the red-headed faery*

I was out for a walk one day when a bright red flash of something in a puddle caught my eye.

At least, I thought it was bright red. This seemed impossible, however; it was a perfectly ordinary puddle on a perfectly ordinary street and there was nothing red anywhere in sight.

When I reached the puddle, I looked closely at it. I was right; there was definitely something red in one corner. I knelt down for a closer look and almost fell over in surprise.

In the puddle was a tiny faery. He was dressed all in green, carried a bow lightly in one hand, and had a head full of fiery red curls.

The faery looked up at me and his eyes twinkled. He pulled an arrow from his quiver, nocked the arrow in his bow, and pulled his arm back.

I don't know why I didn't move out of the way. It didn't make sense to me then and it doesn't make sense to me now.

His tiny arrow flew up through the puddle and hit me in the forehead.



It didn't hurt.

It felt like a kiss, the light kiss your mother gives you at bedtime when she thinks you are already asleep.

Slowly, a warmth spread through my body - the warmth of friendship, of affection, of love.

I waved at the faery, blew him a kiss, and stood up to go back about my day. But as I went, I carried the warmth with me like a blessing.

*The end.*

# jack & the wandering tree

Once upon a time, in a very ordinary house in a very ordinary neighborhood, there lived a boy named Jack.

(I have to pause here to tell you that I'm Jack and this is my story. It seems rather fantastical. I don't think I'd believe it myself if it hadn't happened to me. Sometimes I still don't believe it. It's easier to tell you the story if I pretend that it happened to someone else.)

Jack was sitting on the couch one late fall morning, idly staring out the window, when he saw the tree in front of the window pull its roots out of the ground and walk away.

He blinked his eyes a few times - he wondered if he was still asleep - but after a few blinks, it was clear that the tree was definitely gone. He ran to the window and looked out. The tree was striding across the empty lot next door; bits of trash were caught up in its roots as it went.

Jack didn't stop to think. He ran to the door, grabbed his jacket, and slipped his feet into a pair of tennis shoes. He rushed out the door while trying to shrug his arms into the jacket sleeves.

He ran through the vacant lot after the tree and followed it through two backyards. All of a sudden, the tree stopped.

Jack watched as the tree reached down with one of its branches and carefully plucked a flower from a garden. It was one of the few gardens in Jack's neighborhood that still had flowers blooming. Jack couldn't be sure, but he thought the tree brought the flower to its nose and smelled it before setting off again. (That's what it looked like the tree was doing, only Jack wasn't sure whether trees had noses. Of course, until that moment, he didn't know trees could walk or pick flowers.)

The tree continued on through three more backyards - Jack following closely behind - until it came to the edge of a yard with a large tree in the far corner.

Jack was very familiar with this yard. His friend lived in the house that the yard belonged to and they had spent many hours playing in the branches of that tree.

Jack's tree slowly walked over to the tree in the corner, rather shyly it seemed to Jack, and held out the flower.

The other tree reached out with one of its branches and took the flower.

Jack couldn't be sure, but he thought the trees blushed a little. For a moment, they were suffused with a rosy red glow. Then again, maybe it was just the morning sun. All Jack knew for sure was that the air was briefly filled with the scent of spring blossoms, a scent he remembered from his hours playing in the tree.

Jack's tree shuffled its roots a bit and then turned around and headed home. There was a definite spring in its step.

When it got back to its own yard, it walked right into the hole it had left behind; the ground folded over the roots as if they had been there all along. The only evidence that anything out of the ordinary had occurred was a piece of trash from the abandoned lot that was now partially buried next to the tree.

Jack stood looking at the tree for a while. He had so many questions. How did it walk? Did it leave often? How did it know about the other tree? Could the tree take him for a ride? Did trees talk? In the end, he went inside without saying anything at all.

Later that day, Jack's mother asked him if he was feeling well. She had noticed that he was extremely quiet all day and spent most of his time sitting on the couch, just looking out the window.

Jack wanted to tell her the story, but he wasn't sure if she would believe him. Instead, he assured her that he was fine.

His dreams that night were full of trees.

Jack kept his eyes wide open after that, but no matter how closely he watched, he never caught his tree leaving the yard again.

*The end.*

# clara & the butterfly

Once upon a time, in a far away land known as Minnesota, a baby girl named Clara was born.

Clara was a very special baby. She was full of love & joy & fun and her family adored her.

One spring day, Clara was outside in the sunshine. Her mother was taking her for a walk in her stroller. Clara was staring at the world with big eyes, taking it all in - it seemed to get bigger and bigger by the day - when a butterfly flew in front of her and paused in midair.

"Hello," said Clara. (Of course, she didn't say this out loud. She thought it, which is probably a good thing. Her mother might have been a bit astonished to hear the word hello coming out of her baby daughter's mouth. Especially if she realized her daughter was saying hello to a butterfly.)

"Hello," said the butterfly. "I like you. Would you like to come for a ride with me?"

(You know, I don't really know if the butterfly said this out loud or not. Perhaps it only thought it. Or perhaps it spoke in butterfly language - a language of fluttering dancing

movement. Regardless of how they spoke, the two understood each other perfectly.)

The very next thing Clara knew, she was riding on the back of the butterfly, holding tightly to its neck, while its wings flapped and fluttered on either side of her.

By the time Clara was placed safely back in her stroller, she and the butterfly were fast friends. She knew that the butterfly was a girl named Merrill and that she was on her way to meet a friend for afternoon tea in a newly discovered field of wildflowers when she saw Clara.

Merrill gave Clara a butterfly kiss on her cheek, waved goodbye, and then flew off. Clara watched her until she was out of sight.

A moment after that, her mother stopped the stroller and bent down to give Clara a kiss. She hadn't even noticed Clara was gone.

(I don't know if you know this, but one of the loveliest things about magical encounters is that they happen in the blink of an eye, unless you are the person who is having one.)

Clara smiled happily. She wondered what her mother would say when she told her about Merrill someday.

She knew that even if she lived to be 100, she would never forget her new friend and her ride around the neighborhood.

And she never did.

*The end.*



# *the cricket concerto*

Many many years ago, when I was twelve, my father brought a tiny violin home from his travels.

He had been gone for many months and I was so excited to have him home again.

“Look what I brought you, son!” he said, and pulled out a box.

Inside the box was the tiny violin. It was smaller than my thumb, impossibly small, and it was impeccably crafted.

As I feasted my eyes on the violin, I could hear the faintest hint of music, as if a musician across the valley had just finished a performance and the last echo was still lingering in the air.

I wanted nothing more than to be able to play that beautiful instrument. I set the box carefully on my dresser and checked on it many times a day.

One summer afternoon, I went to my room to check on the violin, only to discover that the box was empty. I let out a cry of shock and disappointment. My parents had been outside in

the yard all morning so I didn't know where it could have gone.

Just then, in the quiet that remained after my cry disappeared, I heard music. It sounded like it was coming from the yard so I went to the patio door and stepped outside.

The air was thick with all manner of winged creatures: birds, butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, dragonflies, and one white seagull who looked very out of place.

Squirrels ran back and forth along the fence and clambered about the branches of the big maple tree in the corner of the yard.

There seemed to be an extraordinary number of caterpillars and ants on the patio floor and - I kid you not - 26 spiders on a single web.

I hardly knew where to look. Fortunately, none of the creatures appeared to notice me so I had plenty of time.

I soon noticed that they were all watching a spot in the center of the yard. I couldn't see anything myself so I ran back inside and got my binoculars - another present from my father - and fixed them on the spot.

There was my violin. Held by a cricket. In a black tuxedo coat and top hat.

I almost fell over in astonishment.

Who knows what I might have done next. Fortunately, I didn't have time. The cricket drew the bow back across the strings and began to play.

Instantly, I was transported into another world.

He played color and light and sensation. He played the smell of the rain and the softness of a feather and the fierceness of courage. He played an army marching into battle and a baby finding its toes and a dog chasing a rabbit across the field. He played thunder and lightning and dawn and dusk and laughter and tears.

All the creatures in the yard were moving in an unconscious primordial dance. They were part of the music and the music was part of them and it was so impossibly beautiful that I fell to the ground with tears and laughter mingled in my breath.

I don't know if the music went on for minutes or if it went on for hours. All I know is that at some point the music stopped, the creatures left, and the violin was returned to its box on my dresser.

I have never been the same.

*The end.*

# *about the author*



Elizabeth Halt is an artist, storyteller & wide-eyed wonderer.

She is here to be a lighthouse: to shine a light of hope + possibility + wonder + magic in a world that sometimes feels entirely too gloomy.

Beauty is her touchstone: she believes that it is all around (and within) us.

You can find her online - and nourish your spirit - at [elizabethhalt.com](http://elizabethhalt.com).

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*wonder+whimsy full stories.*

# gratitude

For Savannah, the original wide-eyed wonderer.

For tulips, clouds hiding in mud puddles, iridescent dragonflies & birdsong, each one filling my heart with wonder.

And for you. Use + share + reprint this freely. It's for you, with love.





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