



AOIFE AND THE TALE OF THE MISSING
MOUSE, MAURICE

By Gerri Hennessy

It was rather a gray day, which meant Aoife slept later than normal. In fact if it hadn't been for her baby brother Sean making a racket while having breakfast in the kitchen, she would have slept later still. Her new magical fairy friend had called to her bedroom window late the evening before. She had been rather frightened at first when she heard the tap tapping coming from her window. She had slowly crept to the window, climbed on her chair, picked up the very edge of the curtain and peeked out. She had nearly tumbled off the chair when Amber's face appeared outside grinning happily. "Jeepers Amber", Aoife whispered "you gave me a fright". "Sorry", giggled Amber. "I was hoping you were awake. I was collecting a tooth from near here and though I could say hello". Aoife opened the window and the little fairy hopped over the window sill and in a flash was sitting on Aoife's bed post. "Are you allowed to be here", Aoife asked. "Eh, well not really", she replied with another giggle "But they will think I'm still collecting the tooth". "How come you had to knock on the window", Aoife asked as she clambered back into her bed, hugging her knees to her chest. "Oh, I don't have to", said Amber twirling on the bed post on one leg sending a shower of glitter in all directions. "But I thought it would be rude just to arrive with no warning". And so the two had giggled and chatted for ages. When Aoife's eyes began to get heavy Amber kissed her on the forehead and in a little sparkle was gone.

Aoife was still very sleepy, but she could hear laughter coming from the kitchen and decided that she should really get up and find out what was so funny. She pulled on her light pink dressing gown, stepped into her slippers and trudged downstairs yawning loudly. "Oh, hello sleepy head", greeted her mother as she bent down to kiss Aoife's curly head. "I thought you would sleep till dinner time". "Sorry Mummy", yawned Aoife sleepily. "I was very sleepy. I could hear you laughing". "They could hear your mother laughing on the moon", her father said laughing, dodging the dish cloth that her mother threw at him. He checked his watch "I am running late"; he said grabbing his lunch from the counter. "I've got go. Kisses to all." And with that dashed out the door and off to work.

"So what was funny?" asked Aoife as she climbed up on her stool and grabbed her favourite cereal box and tipped some of the contents into her bowl. Her mother giggled again "It was just Sean", she said. "I turned my back for 2 seconds and he was covered in food". "Oh right", said Aoife, thinking to her self how often this happened and thought this was pretty normal for her little brother, but she did like to hear her mummy laugh. "So little Miss what are you up to today?" asked her mother. "I dunno really, I suppose I can play in the garden", she said hopefully. "It's not raining". "Sounds ok to me", replied her mother "Just stay out of the bushes today will you, I have never seen so many bits of bushes as you had on your clothes the last day". "I will Mummy", promised Aoife hiding a smile and remembering why she was covered in bits of the hedge. She had climbed through hedges with the tooth fairy Amber in search for the fairies missing wand.

Aoife went upstairs to get her dolls to have a tea party in the garden. For the next while she was busy going in and out getting all the things she would need for her game. At last she was all ready to have her party, all her best china on the table and all her favourite doll dream fairy at the top of the table and Pip the teddy beside her. She was busy making sure every body had tea and cake and was having a lovely time when she heard a noise, a kind of hissing noise. She looked around but there was no one to be seen. She continued with her party pouring a cup of tea for Pip, she heard the noise again. She stopped to listen. "Psssst.. hello, can you hear me", said a squeaky voice. Aoife looked around again, but could still not see anyone. "Hello", she replied. "Where are you?" She was getting a little nervous now. "Down here by the leg of your chair", the little voice squeaked. Aoife looked down and by the leg of her chair was a little brown field mouse. "Hello there", Said Aoife quietly peering down at the mouse. "It is true, you can hear us!" he said excitedly. "We thought Maurice made it up. Wow this is great!!" Aoife lay down on the grass facing the mouse that was quivering with excitement. "I'm Aoife, what your name?" she said "Do you know Maurice?" "Wow, cool, ah em yes he is my brother. My name is Mikey", he replied so excited he was tripping over his words. "My mother says that I should say I'm pleased to meet you, and I really am!" "Oh, and I am very pleased to meet you too Mikey", Aoife giggled. "Do you want to play?" Mikey looked less excited at that question and in the next second looked guilty. "Oh, well I can't really", he said looking rather ashamed. "I've been sent to ask for your help, I was just so excited to meet you I forgot the reason I was her." Mikey moved closer to her and looked up at her earnestly. "Is Maurice with you?" he asked hopefully. Aoife shook her head. "No", Aoife replied slowly. "Last time I saw him was 2 days ago. He had found Amber's wand, and gave it back to her. What's happened?" A big fat tear rolled down Mikey's furry cheek and plopped on the ground. "It's all my fault", he sobbed. "We asked him where he got the beautiful crystal heart that he gave to our Mum for her birthday but when he told us I didn't believe him. I was laughing at him and he ran out upset, we haven't seen him since." Aoife gasped "Oh no", She replied. "We have to find him".

Aoife looked at the little mouse who was still crying big fat tears. "Oh please try not to worry. I'll call Amber; she will know what to do". She reached into her pocket and took out the bell that Sapphire, Amber's mother had given her. When she shook the bell she didn't hear anything, and wondered if it had worked. Mikey looked puzzled. "What are you doing?" he asked. "This bell was given to me by a fairy, to call Amber if I needed her", she said. "Do you know her?" The little mouse nodded. "I have heard of her, she is new on the job isn't she?" he asked. "Yes, fairly new I think. I have only known her a few days", Aoife replied. "I was afraid of the birds, so she blew fairy dust on me so that I would know what they were saying and not be frightened. That's why I can hear you". "Oh I feel so bad now", Mikey moaned "I didn't know about the fairy dust, that's why I didn't believe Maurice". Just then there was a shimmering in the air and a faint sound of laughter. In a burst of sparkles Aoife appeared in the air in front of them and slowly floated to the ground. "Oh Aoife, how exciting. I'm so glad you called for me", Amber cried and she dotted teeny weenie fairy kisses all over Aoife's face. "Amber, Amber please stop", giggled Aoife. "It tickles".

Amber patted Aoife on the cheek gently "Ok so, I will", she laughed. "Is every thing ok? This little mouse looks upset." "Oh Amber he is", said Aoife softly. "Maurice is missing, the mouse that found your wand a few days ago. His family didn't believe his story about you and me and he ran off upset yesterday and is still missing". Amber

looked at Mikey who had begun to cry again. "Don't worry", she said and hugged him. "We will find your little brother, we'll do it together". She grabbed Mickey's paw and Aoife's hand "But we will need some help". Amber looked thoughtful. "Bryony, I think." She murmured. "I'm going to ask one of the bluebell fairies's to lend a hand. We may need extra fairy power." She raised her tiny face and whistled a short melody. She waited a few seconds and then repeated the melody. Within a few seconds there was another flash of glitter and another beautiful fairy appeared. When Aoife saw the two together she noticed differences. Amber was dressed in a white dress with white sparkly wings and the newcomer Bryony the bluebell fairy was dressed in a dark blue with blue and purple sparkly wings and both had pale blond straight hair. "Oh you are both so beautiful", she cried. Bryony smiled at her. "Thank you", she replied shyly. "I love your beautiful curly hair and your big blue eyes". Aoife smiled happily back.

Just then Aoife's mother's voice could be heard calling from the house. "Aoife honey, can you come here for minute". "Coming Mummy", she called back. "I'll only be a few minutes. She ran up the garden and in the back door. Her mother was on the phone. "Could you do me a huge favour and take Sean with you for a while", she asked. "I have some things to do and he is getting really bored". Aoife smiled at her "Yes ok Mummy", she replied. "Come on Sean". She held out her hand and the 2 of them trotted off back down the garden. When they got back down to the party table the 2 fairies looked delightedly at Sean whose eyes lit up when he spotted the fairies "He can see you?" asked Aoife in surprise. "Yes he can", cooed Bryony as she kissed Sean on his cheek. "We love to play with babies early in the mornings when they have just woken up." Sean was laughing delightedly. "You know when you hear Sean laughing in his cot early in the morning?" said Amber. "That is a fairy playing with him. We love to make babies laugh". She proceeded to cover his face in little fairy kisses. After a minute or two Aoife was laughing and Sean giggling, Aoife plopped back to the ground and decided to get down to business. "We have roped in the birds to help", said Bryony. "But we will also need to do a bit more fairy magic if you are both up for it, we will have to take Sean with us now". Aoife looked a little doubtful. "Will he be safe?" She asked "And what if my mummy notices us missing?" Amber patted her gently. "Don't worry", she assured her. "Magic time is different to the time in the human world. That is how Santa gets all the children's presents delivered on Christmas Eve; your mother won't even notice you are gone. Are you ready?" she asked. "Ok", said Aoife with a giggle. "Let's do it". Amber and Bryony stood close together and waved their wands.

In a sparkle Sean and Aoife got smaller and smaller until they stood no higher than the fairies. Aoife looked at her little brother to see if he was scared, but Sean looked completely happy. "Think ye are up for a bit if flying?" asked Amber. "Oh yes", said Aoife happily. She took Sean's hand on one side and the little mouse's hand in the other; the fairies were on each end. "Let's go", sang Amber. Very gently they all rose into the air and off across the hedge to Farmer Bob's meadow. They were greeted by a cluster of birds. "We have found him, we can hear him", they chattered excitedly. "Follow us!" The 2 fairies, two children and the mouse swooped around and followed in the direction the birds had flown. They came to the hedge at the end of the meadow and landed gently on the grass beside the hedge. As they looked over they could see that there was a slope and plastic tube sticking up out of the mud at the bottom. Aoife leaned over as far as she could. "Maurice", she called "are you there? It's me Aoife."

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