

Where are we now?

There are many injustices in this world. Some of them come from intentional evil, others are accidental. We have to deal with both in the course of our lives. Some are personal directed at us as an individual, others are more general, directed against a group of which we are part.

Intentional injustices are, in some ways, easier to deal with. You can identify the villain, the wrongdoer and, even if you haven't got the power to bring him or her or them down, or to reverse their actions, you can at least rail against them. Shout into the wind. It brings some sort of release, some sort of satisfaction.

Accidental injustices are different. Especially those that are not directed against you personally. They may be the unintended outcome of an otherwise well intentioned action, or they may happen because everyone was looking the other way, focussing on some other, more urgent concern. And some just emerge from a developing set of circumstances which no one tries or even thinks to control.

The accidental injustices are harder to deal with. They creep up on you. You don't really notice that it's happened until it's too late. You have to convince others that they have actually happened. That they really are an injustice.

I believe my story is one of the latter. An accidental injustice. Or I should say our story, because it applies to everyone like me. Although there are others of my ilk who have succeeded and who have achieved a higher profile. And the respect that comes with it. The dental reward operatives. The godmothers. The Christmas tree toppers. The Shakespearean fairies: Titania, Oberon, I'm looking at you. The Beckhams of our world. But give them their due, they have worked hard over the centuries and I suppose they deserve everything they have.

But, me, I have been denied my birthright by circumstances beyond my

control. We all started as valued and recognised contributors to society. I was a member of a small, but well respected, group of individuals who gave something to people's lives. I admit not everyone valued our contribution, our position or even our relevance but those who did, thought we were worthy of respect, and they gave it to us. They believed in us. We dwelt at the bottom of every garden where there was a child.

I think things started to go down hill when people stopped talking about us so much. They kind of took us for granted as they found they could access what we had to offer through books and the printed word and not by coming directly into contact with us.

The coming of photography looked hopeful for us. There were some classic pictures that looked as though they could bring us a higher profile, but that didn't last. Trying to ride the bandwagon of a modern invention to maintain a traditional position rarely succeeds, believe me. I know. I have hundreds of years of experience.

I do believe that it's not a lost cause. I believe we need to be more active. The real way to restore our position is through education and that means getting to the kids and getting to them as young as possible and being active. It's no good sitting at the bottom of the garden and waiting for them to come to us, we have to go out and do things for them. Give them something to believe in.

I think that we have to retake some of the roles that have been filled by the incomers, the immigrants. I mean, I don't hold a grudge against them. They have to make a living, have a place in society too, but fair's fair, we were here first.

I mean, magic used to be our arena, and only ours. Now we have wizards, elves, ogres, dragons and goblins and even hobbits. Well, Ok, they don't do magic, but they are part of what has undermined our position. And let's not forget Mr H. bloody Potter.

And don't get me started on trolls. They used to be ugly things living under bridges only appearing when a billy goat, gruff or otherwise, crossed their bridge. But now they are everywhere. All over the internet, in everybody's phones. How can they expect to be scary if they spread themselves so thin? Who on earth would ever take them seriously?

Oh, we still have the occasional cameo role, but they are mostly just token parts compared with what we used to be. People talk about the sock fairy, or the money fairy but they don't really believe. We're incidental, an excuse, never the central character. And the jobs that we used to do are taken by cartoon characters. It's a bit like getting white actors to take on black or asian roles in plays. Sure it works, it appeals to the uneducated, unenlightened public. It entertains. But it's not ethically right.

But I digress. My real concern is that we were once central in the stories, I mean the name says it all, "Fairy Stories" or "Fairy Tales". But how many of them do you know that contain a fairy and if they do, are we anything other than a token role.

So I ask you to join our cause: Make fairies great again.