



# Folkland Fables

Jenni Gudgeon

*For Aase, who also saw fairies.*

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To whom it may concern.  
If you're reading this, you see Faerie's creatures.

You're not the first fairy-seer to exist and I doubt you'll be the last. I've told the gnomes to hand you this book when you're ready to learn more.

I'm the current custodian of Folkland Wood, and unlike the fairies, I won't live forever. I've written this book to describe all the characters who live here in case I'm gone by the time you arrive. You have to decide whether you want to follow in my footsteps.

It's scary when you realise other people don't see the creatures you do. I had no one to help me and think my life would've been easier if I'd had practical advice from someone who'd lived this way before.

Feel free to add your own notes and illustrations to mine. Fairies love their secrets, so there are always new mysteries to solve. My hope is for this field guide to grow through our joint experiences and help future generations of Folkland's fairy-sighted.



**Hidden deep in the heart of Folkland Wood there lies a doorway into Faerie.** It only opens when the moon grins mischievously in the sky, and even then, it's not open long. I've never gone through it myself, but those who have are awe-struck by Faerie's glamour and beauty. However, they're all weirdly affected by their experience, so I decided to stay home. Are the wonders behind the door worth more than your humanity? You need to make up your own mind.

Some fairies come to Folkland Wood to escape the Shining Ones' anger. A few are tourists, stopping off to see the sights. We also get fairies who are confused about their journey, with no idea how to get home. Most have jobs here though, and travel back to Faerie as often as possible.

The name of Folkland's ancient town literally means "Land of The Fairy Folk". Its wood lies to the west; a lush, enchanting place, full to bursting with unseen creatures.



In Folkland's past, man and fairy lived side by side in friendship and respect, until non-seeing humans arrived. They were frightened by the strange ways of the townsfolk, so accused them of witchcraft: a crime which was used to justify some horrendous punishments.

To protect themselves, Folkland's human population pretended not to see fairies. This offended their friends, who faded from sight. Fairy-vision was lost, turning tales of magical creatures from memory into myth.

Once in a while, fairy-seers are still born in Folkland town, and I've spent my entire life enjoying many delightful encounters with the fairies of Folkland Wood.

Welcome to my world.

There's always something lurking in the shadows, and it's always something exciting.



**If you want to make friends with a gnome, tread lightly upon the earth, and never EVER mention fishing rods.** They are hardened eco-warriors who nurse the world's hurts; turning the tables on those who harm it.

Mankind has a reputation as planet killers, so gnomes don't like us much. They don't understand why we take, take, take, without giving back. Then again, neither do I.

Gnomes are a generous, caring race with curious minds and a wicked sense of humour. They've got too much skin for their bodies, which undulates in dramatic waves as they walk. It's truly a sight to behold.

Because gnomes live underground, Folkland Wood is jam-packed with their burrows and lookout posts. One tunnel is even used by humans, its hilarious gnome graffiti on show for all to see. If you're quiet, you might hear them through the walls, going about their business in adjoining burrows.



Gnomes were the first creatures to welcome me when I hesitatingly entered the wood on my own. They taught me fairy ways and introduced me to shyer inhabitants like the brownies.

I was treated straight away like a beloved friend; my arrival marked by a simple ceremony bestowing on me the “freedom to walk the tunnels”. Their instant trust overwhelmed me, so I’ve dedicated my life to becoming a link between man and fairy. I wasn’t asked to do this; nor is it expected of you.

I’ve seen gnomes distraught with grief over a felled tree and incandescent with rage about the poisoning of our planet. Yet at full moon, they drop their responsibilities to host raucous parties in the meadow. Everyone is invited to drink the gnomes’ delicious heather beer, before dancing together till dawn.