



The Faerie Queen of Lo Mein

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A SPARK OF ELECTRICITY MOVED ALONG TELEPHONE lines beneath an overcast sky and above the streets of lower Manhattan. It made an impossible leap just before reaching a transformer and slid down a minor feed line into what the general public saw as an abandoned and boarded up building. Despite the dilapidated condition, there was life to be found within the structure; no small number of otherwise homeless folk were squatting in the apartments within and making do without running water or working electrical outlets.

Out of one of those outlets, in a top-floor apartment, spilled the electrical spark. It landed on the unkempt and splintered hardwood floor, but instead of being grounded or dissipating, it molded itself into a recognizable shape. Arms and legs quickly formed and indicated a torso, above which grew a head. From the arms grew hands, from the legs grew feet, and from the torso grew a pair of breasts. In a moment, the electricity flashed out of existence to leave pale, almost paper-white skin in its place. There, on the floor, stood a woman whose head did not quite reach the top of the outlet she had just come from, and that was only six inches up from the hardwood.

Her hair was short, dark and well kept, thanks to some internally generated static electricity. Her bangs hung low and ended just above a pair of large, pretty blue eyes. She had a tiny little button nose and beneath that a pair of small lips, which, at that moment, were pulled down into a frown.

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From her stomach came a loud, almost savage sounding growl, and in response her knees buckled. She recovered after a moment and, with a hand over her belly, began to stalk around the trash on the floor.

She had skirted an empty soda can and an equally empty bag of chips when she caught a whiff of danger. She froze like a cat in mid-stalk, then slowly lifted her head and took in the air. There was no mistaking the pungent odor of unwashed human. As hungry as she was, it was far more important for her to remain out of sight; very few people reacted well to the extraordinary, and she considered herself just that.

“Rats, foiled again,” she said to herself with no small amount of disappointment on her face. Her stomach complained once more as she turned and ran toward the outlet. Without stopping she dove head first back into the thing.



The tiny creature traveled from apartment to apartment in this way, through the unused electrical cabling, looking for food. She was indeed a faerie, but one spawned in the modern age of electricity, radio, and television, and as such her ties to humanity were a lot stronger than between people and traditional faeries found across the pond. Unfortunately for her, the only thing her hunger-driven searching amounted to was an unintentional census. The overcast sky was threatening rain and, as far as she could tell, none of the denizens of that particular building were interested in a free shower. It was time to move on.



There was one building that she was particularly familiar with. In a second floor spread lived a rather strange couple that had actually seen her and reacted rather well to her presence. She got along wonderfully with the woman, but the man was surly and foul-mouthed and the faerie considered him entirely unpleasant to be around. Despite that he had a habit of leaving food out in the otherwise immaculately kept apartment. There wasn't a guarantee that there would be anything there but it was better than 50/50 odds. Even in her pure-energy state she felt weak; she decided that their place was the best place to go.



The outlet she came out of was in the foyer of the apartment. To her left was the exit door, to her right were the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom, and dead ahead was the living room. Her stomach howled and she found herself moaning right along with it. The search for food had burned up even more energy and she was on the verge of becoming desperate, but still she remained cautious. She listened intently for a second. No sound indicating life within the apartment came to her ears. She lifted her head and sniffed the air.