



In the Land of the Lawn Weenies: and Other Warped and Creepy Tales (Weenies Stories)

By David Lubar



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From the award-winning author of *Hidden Talents*, two remarkable short story collections - *Kidzilla* and *The Witch's Monkey* - together for the first time. *Plus* several brand new stories. Each hilarious and harrowing. A substitute teacher finds out she has some monsters for students. A group of kids attempt a levitation trick with hair-raising results. A neighborhood is so boring the grown ups are turning into...well...you know. And dozens more.

So don't be a weenie! Read these stories!

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Editorial Review

Review

“These stories creeped us out -- and we loved it. Four stars!” ?*Chicago Tribune*

“Really off the wall stories. They're funny thrillers that scare you out of your seat, but have you laughing all the time.” ?*Walter The Giant Storyteller*

“Clever, creepy, and full of surprises.” ?*James Howe*

About the Author

David Lubar created a sensation with his debut novel, *Hidden Talents*, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults. Thousands of kids and educators across the country have voted *Hidden Talents* onto over twenty state lists. David is also the author of *True Talents*, the sequel to *Hidden Talents*; *Flip*, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults and a VOYA Best Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror selection; five short story collections, including *Invasion of the Road Weenies*, *The Curse of the Campfire Weenies*, *The Battle of the Red Hot Pepper Weenies*, and *Attack of the Vampire Weenies*; and the Nathan Abercrombie, Accidental Zombie series. Lubar grew up in Morristown, New Jersey, and he has also lived in New Brunswick, Edison, and Piscataway, NJ, and Sacramento, CA. Besides writing, he has also worked as a video game programmer and designer. He now lives in Nazareth, Pennsylvania.

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In the Land of the Lawn Weenies FAIRY IN A JAR

You probably think of fairies, if you think of them at all, as wonderful little creatures flying happily through the forest, dancing and singing and making merry. Let me tell you something: Fairies might look lovely on the outside, but inside they are ugly, real ugly. Fairies are mean and vicious. They've got teeth like tiny needles. One bite wouldn't hurt much. But I'm pretty sure they wouldn't stop at one; they'd keep biting and chewing until they hit something vital. Fairies aren't good news. I know. Let me tell you about my fairy in a jar.

I'd been running around the backyard trying to catch fireflies with the net from this bug kit I'd gotten years ago. The kit was a birthday present from an aunt who had no idea what I liked. I might have used it once or twice, but mostly it just sat at the back of my closet under a pile of other junk. I'd lost the collecting bottle that came with it, but I found an old jar and punched a couple of holes in the lid. Bugs probably didn't need much air, but it was fun banging away with a hammer and nail. Anyhow, I was swiping the net at some bugs because there was nothing on TV except reruns and all my friends were busy and I couldn't find anything else to do.

I'd caught a couple fireflies and put them in the jar. The whole adventure was . getting boring pretty fast. I was just about to quit when I saw a flash under the birch tree at the back of the yard near the woods. Thinking about it later, I sort of remember that the flash was different. It was more glittery, almost a sparkle.

I crept over and swung the net.

Thunk! Something heavy hit the bottom. I jumped. I thought I'd caught a bat. My skin crawled at that idea. I fumbled the jar lid open and slammed the net down. I felt a solid plunk against the glass. *Got it*, I thought. I needed two tries to get the lid on right. The jar kept shaking in my hand. So did the lid.

A bat. My very own bat. The guys would go wild when I showed it to them.

I held the jar up to see my catch. Three fireflies were crawling around the sides. But that wasn't what grabbed my attention. There was something else crumpled on the bottom. It wasn't a bat--not even close. It wasn't an *it*, either. It was a she.

She unfolded herself and rose slowly to her feet, shimmering in the light of the quarter moon. She was no more than five inches tall. Skinny. Long dark hair. Green dress. Wings. She looked down at her body, as if checking for injuries. The jar was still shaking in short jerks that made her stagger and fight for balance. She pressed her hands against the glass and stared straight at me. For an instant, so quick I thought at first it was my imagination, there was nothing in her gaze but pure hatred.

Then she smiled.

Maybe I should have smashed the jar against the tree. Maybe I should have smashed it and run--just run and run forever. "Maybe" isn't worth much--it's only a word. In a way, I understood how that kid at the playground must have felt last week when I punched him in the gut. Everything inside of me was stunned. I felt that my body had been filled with glue. I held the jar and stared at her.

"Let me go, kind sir." Her voice was like bells and dreams and whispers in my mind.

I grabbed the lid. I started to twist it loose, but that look of hate flashed across her face again. I knew. In that thousandth of a second, I knew I could never set her free. By then, I also knew I didn't want to set her free. She was mine. I had captured a prize no one else could even imagine.

"Wishes," she said. *"I can grant wishes."*

That got my interest. I took my hand off the lid and held it out, palm up. "Show me. A thousand dollars. Right here." I wiggled my fingers.

"You have to free me first."

"I don't think so." I wasn't stupid. I wasn't going to fall for some sort of trick.

"That is the rule." Her voice grew colder.

"I make the rules now." It felt good to say that.

"Please."

"No."

Still staring at me, she flicked her hand out and grabbed one of the fireflies from the side of the jar.

Still staring at me, she raised the struggling insect to her mouth.

Still staring, she bit off the head of the firefly.

I don't know if she kept staring after that. I looked away. But I squeezed the jar, as if to make sure the glass was strong enough to keep her trapped. It was one of those jars people put homemade stuff in. The lady next door had this wormy old apple tree. Each year she made applesauce for the whole neighborhood. Every house got a jar, tied with a red ribbon. No one ever eats it. We just toss out the whole thing, or dump the sauce and keep the jar. The glass felt solid. It would hold her.

I took the jar up to my room, being careful that nobody saw it. I put it on the top shelf in my closet.

The next morning, I almost convinced myself none of it had happened. Almost. But the jar was there. And she was there. At first I thought she was dead. She was crumpled on the bottom again. Then, as I saw her let out a shallow breath, I realized she was sleeping--sleeping or in some sort of suspended state. *Creature of the night*. I don't know where that phrase came from, but it ran through my head. I noticed something else. The bugs were gone--all three of them. *Bon appetit*.

I shook the jar a bit, but she just slid around without waking. I could wait. She'd be up after dark. I was pretty sure of that. Somehow, some way, I was going to get a payoff from her.

Sure enough, when I checked that night, she was awake, sitting on the bottom of the jar. "Good evening," I said, speaking quietly so nobody would hear me talking in my room.

"Set me free. I shall reward you with wonders beyond your imagining." She looked up at me and smiled. A chill ran down my spine.

"Cut the babble and give me some details. What can you do?" I picked up the jar, holding the sides of the lid. Even protected by the glass, I didn't want to put my fingers too close to her.

"Whatever you wish."

I didn't believe her. Promises were easy to make. "Show me."

"Free me first."

I shook my head. It was a standoff, but I was the one with the power. She was mine. She would give me something valuable. She had no choice. I owned her now. "Think about it," I said, putting the jar back on the shelf. "Think of some way to buy your freedom. I'm sure you'll come up with an idea."

She gave me that look again, and a flash of those teeth. I closed the closet door and left the room. The next day, we had the same conversation, and the same again on the day after. I wanted proof. She wanted freedom. But she was weakening. I could see that. I knew she had to give me a reward sooner or later. I could wait. I was in charge.

On the fifth day, she agreed to my request. "I will transmute an object for you," she said. Her voice was thinner, barely louder than a thought.

"Transmute?"

"I will change its form. Give me carbon. I will make a diamond."

"A diamond? That's more like it." I wondered for a moment how I was going to sell a diamond. But that problem could wait. Right now, I needed some carbon. That was easy enough. Charcoal for the grill, that was carbon. So was the graphite in pencils. So were diamonds. They were all just different forms of carbon. I couldn't believe that something I learned in Mr. Chublie's stupid science class was actually worth knowing. Live and learn. But I wasn't about to try to stick a big hunk of charcoal in the jar. There was no way I was opening that lid, not even for a second. I wasn't falling for any of her tricks. As I looked around the room, I saw the answer right next to me.

I yanked out my desk drawer and hunted around the sides and corners. "Got it." Perfect. I knew I had it in there--a whole pack of refills for my mechanical pencil. The best part was that they were thin enough to slip through the air-holes in the lid of the jar. I was planning to keep a nice, solid barrier between me and those teeth, thank you.

She gathered the pieces of lead. "This will take some time."

"I can wait."

She sat staring at the slivers of carbon. I put the jar away for the night. In the morning, I rushed to the closet to see my first diamond. In my head, I'd already spent the money--a new bike, new sneakers, all the new video games. The guys were definitely going to envy me.

But she wasn't finished. The pieces of lead were still there, though they looked smaller and shinier than before. "It takes time," she said.

I would have to be patient.

"It takes time," she warned again that evening.

I waited. On the fourth night, she was done. "Here." She held up her hand. "Take this and set me free."

"What are you trying to pull?" I almost smashed the jar. There was nothing more than the tiniest sparkle in her tiny hand. She had made a miniature diamond chip. It was worthless. My dreams of wealth turned pale and vanished.

"This is all I can give you. Take it and set me free. You made a bargain."

I was so disgusted, I just put the jar back in the closet and went to bed. Maybe I heard something that night. I can't remember. I'm too scared to really remember. But I remember the morning. Every second is burned into my brain.

I got up. I walked to the closet. The door was open about an inch. I'd thought I'd closed it. I opened it all the way and reached for the jar. My hand stopped. My breath stopped. My heart almost stopped. There was a hole in the side of the jar. There was a round piece of glass on the shelf next to the jar. She was gone.

How? Then I knew. The diamond. She'...

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