

In a Pinch

by Kevin Myrick

His worst nightmare had come true. He wasn't wearing green and all of the other kids were. He was a walking bulls' eye for pinches. It was safe in class under the watchful eye of his teacher, but out on the playground it was war. St. Patrick's Day at an elementary school can truly be torture.

He was at the back of the pack as his classmates ran outdoors like raging lunatics. He hoped beyond hope no one would notice he was the only kid who wasn't wearing green. The third graders in Ms. Jones class had already descended upon Grady Walker by the tire swings. Every green goblin around him took a turn giving him a hard pinch on the arm. He sneaked around to the other side of the gym unable to watch the tragedy any longer. He found the kids who played Magic: The Gathering as they spoke in strange tongues about hit points and ogres.

"Hey pal, you're hiding too? The other kids are over there," one of the kids pointed underneath a trailer deck. The portable classroom was as close to sanctuary as he was going to get. He found a couple of girls and another boy waiting underneath for the bell to ring.

"Go away! They're going to find us if you're here too!"

"I wasn't seen, I swear."

As soon as he said it, the unthinkable happened. The blond-headed beauty of his class, Chelsea, spotted him as she came around the corner looking for targets.

"Patrick! I found another one!"

They came on like zombies in a movie chasing fresh meat and

chased him around the other side of the gym. A mob waited for him on the other side that included Grady, who stood and waited to inflict equal pain he himself received. They chanted in low tones "Paddy, Paddy, Paddy" as Patrick, the ring leader, tightened the circle for the pinch party.

"Wait! I have green underwear on!" Daniel yelled out. His bluff was met with murmurs. Had they gotten an innocent in their haste? What were they to do?

"Let's see," a shorter kid from another class said.

"I'm not showing you my underwear in front of everyone."

"Then how are you going to prove it?"

He hesitated. That was all the mob needed to prove he was lying. "Get him!" the short kid yelled out, and surrounded he sank into a sea of pinches from every side, on every part of his body. It hurt, hurt more than when he nearly chopped his finger off on the garage door rail.

The bell rang just in time before worst damage was done. His glasses had fortunately been spared damage, though when he brushed himself off the ground he found them dirty.

Back in class, he skin glowed rosy red as he stood in front of the class and recited multiplication tables. He never did like the holiday.

