

Easter Bunny

Mention of the Easter Bunny in my presence always brings a negative response. I lost all appreciation for that icon many years ago when I was child.

Picture little me at maybe seven years old, tired and sleepy after a full day of Catholic school classes and Catechism questions, minding my own business as I sat in the living room, Dad at work on the night shift, Mom devouring a Reader's Digest shortened novel. (I'm sorry, but I have to interrupt this story to ask what sniveling hack had the gall to cut up great novels and shorten the sentences! If you can't hold any more than a dozen words in your head without it leaking, limit yourself to Hemmingway or the Daily News!)

Anyway, I heard a noise in the kitchen and I set down my novel by Erle Stanley Gardner ... well, maybe it was a comic book ... and walked to the other end of the flat. On this warm evening in early spring at dusk the sky dribbled a meager light through the kitchen windows to illuminate all but the deeper shadows. I noticed the door to the flat was open to the back hallway. I reached for the wall switch to turn on the ceiling light, but froze in horror as a shape emerged from the hall and stepped toward me in the semi darkness. A five foot high pink rabbit waved at me and a muffled voice cried "Hi!"

From my mouth came a screech so loud and piercing the window panes rattled and the rabbit drew back partly into the shadows.

The lights magically came on as my mother rushed into the kitchen. The Easter Bunny pulled its head off and dropped to its knees, sending me right over the top. I tried to screech again, but I was still on my first and when I finished I wouldn't have enough breath for a second. I wouldn't have enough breath until midnight. Mrs. Hallack from next door, my mother's friend when she wasn't drinking (Mrs. Hallack), was laughing and down on her knees crawling to me. I grabbed a RevereWare copper-bottomed pan from the stove and hit her full across the face with it. I wasn't sure what was coming after me. It didn't matter. Had it been Pope Pius the Twelfth down on my kitchen floor in a pink rabbit suit selling his encyclicals he would have received the same welcome.

Smacked with a frying pan across the face, Mrs. Hallack sobered quickly. As blood began to trickle from her nose, she hauled off and threw a punch at me, but my mother intervened by stepping between us. Mom was on her feet, so she took the blow in the stomach and it was not appreciated. She grabbed Mrs. Hallack by her pony tail and dragged the woman backward on her knees across the linoleum and out into the back hall. She slammed the door and locked it. Mrs. Hallack would never visit us again. My Mom said she'd never been in a real girl fight before. Ever! She was breathing hard, but she looked pretty pleased with herself as she very carefully pried the frying pan from my hands.

I haven't eaten a chocolate bunny since.

David Griffin

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