

Magic Tree House43

Leprechaun In Late Winter (Unabridged)

This is the author, Mary Pope Osborne.

A few years ago, I visited county Gore way in Ireland, I traveled through sea set towns, a long rocky coast and took a boat out to the lonely Irish island. At the mouth of the Gore way bay, I love the lush green ship meadows of countryside, the smell of peat fires rafted to the misty rain, the cozy pubs where we have change breath, strong tea, every sense of this visit, I've loved Irish music, literature, especially the folklore, flapper cons, fairies, and legendary Irish heroes and heroines.

So now I want to share Ireland with you, get ready for a journey to the enchanted countryside of Gore way to a time 150 years ago when mysterious creatures still hid in the forests and hills.

Be careful, not to let them see you.

Or you might be turning into a skunk or a weasel.

But don't be afraid, just have a great time with Jack and Annie.

Chapter 1: a beautiful world

It was a chilly afternoon in late winter, Annie was doing her homework on her computer in the living room, Jack sat on the couch, and stared at a blank page in a small notebook, he heaved a sigh.

What's wrong? Said Annie.

I have to write a story for school. Said Jack. I'm stunt.

Well, you'd better get unstunt. Said Annie.

Mom and dad said we have to get our homework down before we go to the theater tonight.

I know. Said Jack. But I can't think of anything to write about.

Why don't you do what you love to do? Said Annie. go outside and ride on some facts about what you will say and then turn them into a story.

Hi! That's a good idea. Said Jack. Thanks!

He jumped up and grabbed his coat from the hall closet, and then taking his pencil and notebook with him and headed outdoors.

The early march weather was sunny, cold and windy, Jack looked around, then he wrote down some facts in his notebook.

Old snow in the yard, sun sparkling on the sidewalk,

Jack looked up again

Tree top swayed in the march winds,

Jack started to write about them.

But when he looked down at the notebook, he nearly dropped his pencil, on the page were two large fancy letters: TK

Oh! Man! Whispered Jack.

He dashed back in the house and into the living room,

Annie! look!

Jack held up his notebook,

Look at this!

Annie stared at the page,

Old snow, sun sparkling, nice.

No, not that. Said Jack

The letters!

Annie looked at Jack like he was a little crazy.

Ah, what letters? She said

Jack looked back at the page, they are gone. He said.

The big fancy T and K .

T and K? said Annie.

Yes! For Teddy and Catherine. Said Jack. The letter just peered on the page when I was outside. They were there, really!

I believe you. Said Annie.

She jumped up from computer.

Let's go.

Wait, I have to get my backpack from upstairs. Said Jack.

Forget it, come on, the tree house must be waiting for us. Said Annie.

Ok1 ok! Said Jack,

He quickly shut his notebook and pencil into a pocket with coat,
Annie grabbed her Jacket,

Mom! Dad! We'll going to take a little break for out homework. She called.

Ok! But make it sure we have to leave for the theater by 7. their dad called from the kitchen

We will. Said Jack.

Jack and Annie headed outside, they ran over the melting snow of their courtyard, front yard, and up the sun sparkling sidewalk, they charged across the street, and into the frog creek woods. They hurried between the wind blown trees until they came to the tallest oak.

High in the branches, was the magic tree house.

Their friends from Camelot, Teddy and Catherine were looking out of the window,

Hello! Called Catherine.

Hi! Shouted Annie. waving

Good trick with the magic letters! Jack called.

We saw you like that. Said Teddy.

I just learned how to do it.

Annie grabbed the rope ladder and started up, Jack followed her.

They climbed into the tree house, and hug the young enchanters.

So what's up today/ asked Jack.

Where does Merlin want us to go now? asked Annie.

Merlin wants you to go to some way Ireland. Said Catherine.

Ireland? Cool. Said Annie.

Merlin sent us to Ireland once before to the nine century. Said Jack.

Yes. Well this time you will go to Ireland in the 1900s. said Teddy.

To 1862, exact. Your mission is to find an imaginative and creative girl named Augusta.

Augusta doesn't a girl's name. Augusta doesn't know yet what her talents are. Said Catherine. She lives in time when it's not easy for girls to explore their creativity, your mission will be to inspire her. So she can give her gifts to the world.

What that word mean exactly? Asked Annie.

Inspire. To the beautiful world.

Inspire, is a beautiful word. Said Catherine.

Her sea blue eyes shinning, it means to bring life to a person's heart.

To made it filled with joyful to be alive.

That is beautiful. Said Annie.

You may need some magic to help you. Said Teddy, from the corner of the tree house, he picked up the magic trumpet that helped them in their last journey,

Only this time, Teddy handed the trumpet to Catherine, she held the shining braze instrument for a moment, then she tossed it into the air, the trumpet span like a whirlwind it was flashed into blue light and the trumpet was gone, in its place was a thin silver pipe with six holes. .

What's that? Breathed Jack.

An Irish whistle. Said Catherine.

She pulped the whistle instrument from the air, when you face great danger. One of you must play it, it will make magical music, and anything the other one sings, will come true.

But remember said Teddy, its magic will work only once.

Right, said Annie.

Thanks. Said Jack.

He took Irish whistle from Catherine and put it into his pocket.

And did morgan send us research book giving us information?

Not this time. Said Teddy. Morgan wants you to drop on your own experience in life, to help you on this journey.

No problem. Said Annie.

Jack wasn't sure about it. He liked having a book of facts to help them

So how do we find Augusta? Said Annie.

It should be easy to find her. Said Teddy, when you landed to county of Gore away, Ireland, just ask anyone for directions of big house.

Hold on.

Jack put out his own notebook and wrote:

County of Gore away, Ireland

Augusta,

Big house.

Got it. Said Jack. But how do we get to Ireland in the first place we don't have a research book?

Point to the notes, you just made. And make your wish. Said Catherine.

And whey you are ready to come home, said Teddy, use the

Pennsylvania book as you usually do.

Got it. Said Jack.

Go now.

And help Augusta. Said Catherine. She needs you.

Jack pointed to the words: go away Ireland, in his notebook,

I wish we could go there. He said.

Bye! Annie said to Teddy and Catherine.

Farewell. Said Catherine.

Good luck. Said Teddy.

The wind started to blow. The tree house started to spin. It spun faster and faster. Then everything was still. Absolutely still.

Chapter 2: the big house

A cold wind blew rain into the tree house. Jack shivered. He was wearing an old over coat, and rugged trousers, Annie wore scarf and shawl and a long white wool dress. They both wore scarfed worn boots.

So where are we? Said Jack.

He and Annie looked out of the window, the tree house had landed in a tree, at the edge of the green meadow with woolly white sheep. Next to the meadow was a narrow lane. It ran uphill between low stone walls. Through the drizzle Jack could see mist covered mountains in the distance. And a flash of silver sea,

It looks like a sea in the fairy tale. Said Annie.

Yeah. The fairy tale with bad weather. Said Jack.

I wonder where the big house is. Said Annie.

I don't know, but I'd like get inside now. said Jack.

Me too. Said Annie shivering

Let' go.

Jack scrambled his cold hands into the pockets of his torn coat. In one pocket, he felt his notebook and pencil, in the other he felt the Irish whistle.

I've got the whistle. He said.

Good, said Annie.

She held her red skirt and started down the rope ladder, Jack climbed down next her.

Annie pulled her shawl tightly around her shoulders, Jack turned up the collar of his coat, as they tramped through the wet meadow, he felt cold water slipping through his whole boots. Jack and Annie climbed over a stone wall, unto the muddy lane. A horse strong

wagon was resting toward them down the hill. The wagon was filled with squealing pigs.

Excuse me! Annie called to the driver. Can you tell us where the big house is?

An old man with a tired rugged face pointed back up the hill.

Thanks! Said Jack.

The large wooden wheels of the wagon rumbled past, splashing Jack and Annie with mud.

Yek! Said Annie.

Now we're cold, wet and dirty. Said Jack.

Yeah. We get a little grumpy when we get to the big house. Said Annie.

So what do we do and get there? Asked Jack.

When we find Augusta maybe we'll tell her Teddy and Catherine sent us. Said Annie.

Like we told Louis Armstrong in New Orleans.

Just thinking about their adventure with Louis Armstrong. Made Jack smile.

I don't know if it will work. He said.

This will seem so different from this world. There were so noisy and busy, here feels lonely.

Well we won't know where we will find Augusta. Said Annie.

Let's go.

Jack and Annie lowed their heads, they ploughed up the lane, slouching in and out of the giant paddles, when they reached the top of the hill, they stopped. The muddy lane well come down, past more sheep meadows and some cottages past long stable, and several barns..

At the end of the lane, was a large open gate, that led onto the ground of wide mansion. Grey smoke rose from the mansion's chimneys.

The big house. Said Annie.

Maybe the people who live there would advice us some site to get warm and dry by a fire. Said Jack.

Jack and Annie started down the lane. As they passed sheep meadows, black and white dogs barked at them. When they walked by several boys hauling white hay, the workers looked up an eye at them suspiciously.

Jack was relieved to get to the gate, and headed toward the big house, when they reached the front door, Annie lifted the heavy knocker and let it drop.

A moment later, the door opened, a pale teenager girl looked out.

Who are you? Why are you here?

Ah.. well, stunted Jack,

Are you the ones the bugler sent for? the girl asked.

The bugler? Said Jack.

Yes we are. Said Annie.

Then you should go around to the back. the girl said.

Before Jack or Annie could ask for a gust, the girl slammed the door in their faces.

Nice. Said Jack.

I hope she was Augusta. Said Annie.

Why did you tell her yes? Asked Jack.

It's the way to get inside the big house. Said Annie. come on.

Jack and Annie tramped through the mud, to the back of the mansion. They stopped at the door beneath the large smoking chimney.

Annie knocked again, This time a young red haired girl in the cap and neborn opened the door.

Yes? She said.

Is your name...

Started Annie.

Who is it? Molly? Someone called from inside.

Molly? So she's not Augusta. Thought Jack.

Who are you? Molly asked them,

We are the ones bugler sent for. Said Annie.

You? Said molly.

She looked down for...

Then come in and see him then...

Jack and Annie stepped inside,

He's in the kitchen. Said molly.

She started down the hall, Jack and Annie followed molly to the door way of the deem lit kitchen. The kitchen smelt fishing and onions, pots and pans hang from long red over big wooden table, a stout old woman was bent over to table, rolling out a dew.

Cook! Here are the ones the bugler sent for. Said Molly.

The cook looked up from her dew and squinted at Jack and Annie.

You are the ones he sent for? She said.

Ah..yes, ma'am, that's us. Said Annie.

The cook turned to fireplace, next to the fire, an ancient looking man with white whiskers, sat slumping the chair, snoring.

Mr. old leary!

The old man jerked and opened his eyes. The ones you sent for are here. The cook shouted, as if the man was hard for hearing.

The groggy bugler peered at Jack and Annie.

I sent for you? He growled. Not possible. I sent for a coach driver

and a blacksmith.

Really? Said Annie. I guess there was a mistake. But maybe there are less jobs we can do around here.

Well, what are you good for? Asked bugler.

What do you mean? Said Jack.

Do you know how to sweep inside the chimney? Said the old man.

Am..no. said Jack.

Pluck chicken? The cook asked.

No way. Said Annie.

What about rats? The bugler said, what about them? Asked Jack.

They are all over the seller. Said the cook.

Can you catch them/

Ar..I I don't think so. Said Jack.

Then you are not good to us here. Snarled the bugler. Be on your way!

At that moment, Jack heard the backdoor opened and shut, a girl about Jack's age stepped into the kitchen, she wore a red cape, and carried two long empty baskets. Her red hair was parted near down to the middle, and pulling to a tight bund in the back.

Ah...said the cook.

Welcome back, Miss. Augusta,

Chapter 3: Miss Augusta

Jack and Annie looked at each other,

Augusta!

The girl put down her baskets, and took off her wet cape,

Did you do leave your cakes to the poor, miss Augusta? Asked Molly.

Yes. Molly. Said Augusta.

I visited 7 cottages today,

?? In this weather?

Yeah.

An angel miss Augusta. Said molly. Always so kind to the poor.

It's my duty, molly. The girl said. to help those less fortunate than myself.

Her gaze rested on Jack and Annie,

And who are these poor children?

They are looking for work, miss. Said the cook. But I am afraid that sorry creatures not good for anything. I was just sending them away.

Oh, surly, we must not turn them so quickly, cook. Said Augusta.

How tired and miserable they look!

Jack didn't think they looked that

We're tired and miserable, Annie said.

Her voice sounded sad, her shoulder shrugged,

Oh, brother! Jack thought.

Annie was really acting on her part.

My poor dears, you must both come from the parlor rest of bit? Said Augusta.

We'll like that. Annie said pitifully.

Follow me. Said Augusta.

Miss Augusta, surely you'll take these dirty children into the parlor?
Said the cook.

We must be always be kind to the poor. Cook. No matter how dirty thing they are. Said Augusta. We should give them something to drink if they are thirsty, and something to eat if they are hungry.

You are too kind miss Augusta. Said molly, shaking her head.

Well at least make them take off their fussy boots. Said the cook.

Jack and Annie put off their boots and socks, and set them by the door. Their feet were red and raw looking, Augusta took two pearled potatoes from the bowl, and put them into her pocket, then she picked up a lit candle from the hoss,

Come, let me take you to the parlor. She said to Jack and Annie.

Thanks. Augusta. Said Annie.

Show some more respect. The cook called after Annie. call her

miss Augusta.

Sorry. Said Annie, thanks. Miss Augusta.

Jack rowed his eyes.

Why should we call her miss?

Augusta didn't look like she was any older than he was.

Holding her flicking candle, Augusta led Jack and Annie out of the kitchen, the wooden floor quaked as they walked barefoot to a narrow hallway.

How are we ever going to inspire this strange serious girl? Wondered Jack. She acts as if she's already a grownup, and treats Annie and me as babies.

We will sit here, children. Said Augusta.

She directed Jack and Annie into a large room with heavy curtains and dark furniture. The pale teenager girl who answered the front door, sat on a sofa, knitting. Another teenager girl knitted beside her.

They scared then they saw Jack and Annie,

What are you doing? Augusta? Asked the pale girl. Why are you bring those two into the parlor?

I invited them to take a rest. Said Augusta.

She turned to Jack and Annie,

Pay no attention to my sisters. She said.

Please, sit down.

Augusta! Have you gone mad? Said the girl, chewed, you can not invite these two rug orphans in here! Mother will be furious. Said Augusta's other sister.

They are falsie, they are not even wearing shoes.

Jack looked down at his muddy clothes and cold red feet.

Cook and me removed their muddy shoes in the kitchen, oblizer.

Eliezer. Augusta said.

I only wish I had nice dry shoes to give them. Sit down, children.

She said to Jack and Annie. again.

Jack and Annie slowly sat down.

You're going to get into trouble, Augusta. Said girl chewed.

Mother will never approve, said Lisa.

Both sisters shook their heads as they went back to their knitting.

Augusta ignored her sisters, and walked to a silver teapot on the sideboard,

Would you like some hot tea, poor dears? She asked Jack and Annie.

Yes. Miss Augusta. Said Annie.

Jack nodded. Hot tea sounded good. He still felt chilled from the cold wind and rain. There was fireplace in the jewelry parlor. But no fire was lit. everything in the room seemed too dark and gloomy.

Except for a few books on the table. As Augusta poured tea into fancy china cups, Jack leaned closer to get a better look to the books. One was titled: the plays of William Shakespeare. The other was called the tales of king Arthur. Jack smiled to himself, seeing those books' titles made him a litter more comfortable.

Augusta carried cups of tea to Jack and Annie, then she pulled the potatoes out of her pocket, and gave one to each of them.

Thank you, miss Augusta. Said Annie.

Jack took a sip of tea, but it was too hot and bitter to drink. He took a bite of his potato, but it was too hot to chew.

So miss Augusta, what do you like to do around here? Annie asked.
What inspires you?

Augusta looked puzzled.

I do not know what you mean. She said.

What about reading books? Said Jack have you read all those books?

He pointed to the tales of king author. Arthur, and plays of William Shakespeare.

Those books belong to my brothers. Said Augusta, the time is not come for Augusta to read such books. Said her sister who are chewed.

Not until she's older. Said her sister Eliza.

Why? Asked Jack.

Mother says the tales of king Arthur and plays of Shakespeare are not for young ladies. Said Augusta.

Really? Said Jack.

Yes. But I'm afraid I sometimes pick my brothers' books. Augusta said to Jack and Annie in a low voice. I love stories. I remember every stories I read or hear,

I love stories too. Said Annie.

And I love books.

The two elder sisters smiles.

Keeps driving my dear. Said Eliza. Perhaps one day you will learn to read.

I already know how to read, said Annie. Jack and I read lots of books.

She pointed to the books on the table, in fact we know tons of tales of king Arthur. And we go and see plays of Shakespeare with our parents. And one time we even acted in a play by Shakespeare. A midnight's summer dream. ..

It was acted at our school. Jack broke in. before Annie could tell them, that she and Jack actually met Shakespeare himself.

A midnight's summer dream? Said Augusta.

She looked surprised,

Don't listen to them, Augusta, said girl chewed.

I dare these children have ever been to school. Much less have acted in a play by William Shakespeare .

I suspect you are quite right. Said the girl chewed.

A tall woman was standing in the doorway of the parlor. She wore a long black silk dress, and stood very straight, there was an icy look on her face, as she stared at Jack and Annie,
Oh! Mother! Said Eliza.

Chapter 4: what are you good for?

Hi! There. Annie said cheerfully.

Augusta's mother did not reply

She was staring at Jack's bare feet. Her expression made him sink down in his chair.

Do not punish Eliza and me, mother, said the girl chewed. These are Augusta's friends. Not ours.

I took a pity on them, mother. Said Augusta. They were wet and miserable.

Her mother finally smiled,

Yes. Daughter. Have imagine they were. It's very nice to have pity for the poor. But dirty children should not be sitting in our parlor.

They were hungry, mother. Said Augusta.

Yes, and I see you have given them food. Said her mother, so it's time to get them out of the house now.

Jack and Annie stood up, Jack was happy to leave, he felt like Augusta and her mother was talking about the stray dogs or cats, but Augusta sat very still, and just stared at her mother,

Go on, get them out of here, Augusta, said girl chewed. They are not clean. They might have bugs in their hair,

The mire mention of bugs made Jack scalp itch, he and Annie both scratched their heads,

See? Said girl chewed.

Augusta! Her mother said in a stern voice.

Oh, all right, alright, said Augusta standing on, I was trying to be kind, come with me, please. She said to Jack and Annie. I'll lead you down the lane of bit, at least pass the sheep dogs.

As Augusta started out of the room, her mother stopped her and pinched her shoulders.

Carry yourself straight, daughter. She said.

Jack couldn't imagine how the girl carry herself any straighter.

Augusta led Jack and Annie back down the dark hallway, through the fish smelling kitchen, passed the ancient bugler sleeping by the fire, and three kitchen maids on the cook. Without a word, she grabbed her red cape and pulled it around her.

Where are you going? Miss augusta? Asked molly.

I have been ordered to send these poor children back out into the storm. Augusta said.

Jack and Annie foisted their feet into their stiff wet socks and boots. Augusta held the door for them, and followed them outside, slamming the door behind her. Even though it was still raining and windy, Jack felt much happier outside the big house than inside it. He and Annie followed Augusta, passed the gates and out to the lane. Augusta walked stiffly leading them like a mother duck.

What are we going to do about her? Annie whispered to Jack.

I don't know. Whispered Jack. She doesn't seem very creative or imaginative to me,

Well we have to inspire her. Come on! said Annie.

She and Jack hurried to catch up with Augusta.

Miss Augusta! Said Annie walking along beside her. Do you like to sing?

Dance, paint? Play musical instrument or anything creative like that?

No. said Augusta.

She sounded angry, Jack figured she must be matted with her mother for kicking them out of the big house.

Or what about nature/ said Annie.

What about it? Asked Augusta.

Walking in the woods, said Annie, trees, birds does anything like that inspire you?

Not any more. I was close to nature once. Augusta said. I used to roam the woods with my younger brothers. They said wood like a ruby with the air in hot, I knew where to find caves of the otters, I knew where to find nests of wild birds, ,...

That's so cool. Said Annie.

I knew where the deer lie down to sleep, said Augusta, I knew the names of every tree, oak, beech, elm, hazel and large pine.

Augusta's voice grew a little loudly, as if she might cry.

But I am now not allowed to roam the woods with my brothers anymore, mother says it's not proper for young lady

That's so sad. Said Annie.

Never mind. Said Augusta lifting her chin.

Let's not talking about me any more. Let's try instead of talking two

of you. Cook said you are good for anything. Why would she say that?

They asked us if we were good for cleaning chimneys, plucking chicken or catching rats. Said Annie, and we said no.

Then you must find other ways to make yourselves useful. Said Augusta. Or you will find your way in the world. Can you shear sheep?

We've never try it. Said Jack.

Milk cows? Chin Butter? Weave a shawl? Augusta asked them patiently, Hunt rabbits with horns?

Oh, never that. Said Annie.

Jack laughed.

Augusta frowned.

This is nothing to live about. Everyday you must ask yourselves, what am I good for

Actually, that was a good question. Jack thought. Who are you good for?

And we would like to give you a piece of advice. Side Augusta.

Never make up stories about yourselves as art true.

What do you mean? Said Jack. You never acted in a play of Shakespeare's. did you?

Did you? Tell the truth now. said Augusta.

We did. Said Jack. My sister was telling the truth. We're both actors in the midnight's summer dream.

We played wood fairies, said Annie. we have green costumes, Jack even make a little speech and I danced and sang.

Augusta shook her head,

You poor dears, she said. I know you only make up these wild stories because your real life was so miserable,

But .. wait a minute, stop! Said Jack,

What's wrong with you? Why do you ask so snobby?

Snobby? Me?

Augusta seemed confused.

Jack, said Annie,

No, I'm serious Jack said to Annie.

She think she's better than us,

No, I don't. Augusta said. stunt . I don't like it at all. Each day I walked several miles to town, to give kicks and clothes to poor children like yourselves.

That's nice. Said Jack, but you think you're better than those poor children, don't you? You'd never wanted to be real friends with them, would you?

What you say about me it's not true? Augusta said to Jack, I love the poor, while my favorite friend of the world is quite poor, and

she's never been to school. Some say she's even a little crack in her head, but I love her dearly.

Who's that? Asked Annie.

Mary. Mary Sheridan, our old nurse maid. Said Augusta. I will take you to meet her. Mary will tell you the truth about me, come along.

Augusta ran from the lane, and crossed the muddy grass, her red cape flying in the wind

Am, I don't think you have inspired her. Annie said.

I know. I am sorry. Said Jack. I just couldn't take her attitude any longer.

What can we over it? Said Annie, we supposed to help her not annoy her.

She was annoying me said Jack.

Yeah. I know. Said Annie,

Me too. But we've got the mission, come on,

Jack and Annie followed Augusta across the grass to a small white cottage with a straw roof. Augusta bAnnied on the door, scaring away birds hidden by the front steps.

Mary! Mary! It's me, Augusta. She called.

Come in. my dear. A voice answered.

Augusta lifted the latch, and led Jack and Annie inside. Raped in a brown shawl, Mary Sheridan was stroking in an orange cat by the open fire. She had rugged white hair, and bright blue eyes, her cricket smile, revealed a few missing of teeth.

One and twenty welcome to some this wonderful winter day. Said the old woman.

Chapter 5: a fire set tale

Hello! Marry! Said Augusta.

She kissed the old woman on her wrinkle cheek. With fire light on her face, marry seemed to glow, her warm snout cottage was the upset the big house. It's small and damp lives set mass Briton chocolate. Fire light danced in the Olsen floor and stone walls, rain dripped through the roof, pinning into a couple of ten buckets.

And who do we have here? Miss Augusta? Marry asked

Two poor children, from town, said Augusta. I want you to tell them about me. how I truly love them the poor, and try to help them.

Marry smiled.

Please, sit down. First. She said.

Jack Annie and Augusta sat down on three wooden chairs,

Would you children like some hot coco? Marry asked.

Jack and Annie nodded eagerly.

Yes. Please marry. Said Augusta. But would you tell them

Yes. I will tell them all about you. Said marry.

She picked up a pile sitting on the huts, she pulled the steaming coco into three mugs, and handed them to Jack Annie and Augusta.

The coco smelt delicious. Jack took a sip licks off his lips.

Ye..m. he said.

His inside felt warm, first time all day.

Now, marry, asked Augusta.

In time. Child. Marry said to Augusta.

Tell me, what have you been and doing today.

I delivered the cakes in town, Augusta said proudly. Then I found these poor children in the kitchen looking for work, I've tried to help them. But they say I am snobby. I brought them here, so you could tell them the truth about me.

Ah.. I see. Miss Augusta.

How did you try to help them? Said Mary?

I tried to discover what they're good for. Said Augusta. But it appears they are good for nothing.

Really? Marry fixed her twinkling eyes at Jack and Annie.

Well, let's start with these children. Tell me something you like to do.

No wait. What do you love to do?

Ah...well. I love to read, said Jack.

And write. Said Annie.

Read and write? Said Augusta. I don't think so.

Mary ignored Augusta, kept looking at Jack and Annie, what do you like to read and write? Asked Mary.

Facts, mostly. Said Jack. True stories,

Jack read facts down all the time, said Annie.

Honestly Mary, said Augusta. Soon they will tell you they are actors too. And they performed a play by William Shakespeare .

Can you talk about me now?

Actually that's true. Jack said to Mary. We were in the midnight's summer dream. Annie and I were fairies, I had a stage flight, but while..

He met William Shakespeare himself. Said Annie.

He helped me get over. Said Jack. He looked straight at Augusta.

Augusta rolled her eyes,

While he was so nice

And smart, said Jack.

Of course he was. Said Mary. You can tell that from your stories.

Oh, please, stop. Don't tell Mary those ridiculous things! Augusta

said.

What about me, Mary?

Wait, child. I have a question for them. Mary said.

She leaned forward, and spoke in a whisper,

Where is summer ? can you answer me that/

Mary's question doesn't make sense, Jack thought.

I don't know. Do you know where summer is Mary? Asked Annie.

Summer is heading with the Shea . Said Mary laughing.

The Shea? What's that/ said Annie.

Surly you must know the Shea? Said Mary. That's where we Irish called our ferries. In the winter the Shea still out of the warm and sunshine, leaving us to suffer with cold and rain,

Annie laughed too.

So you've played the parts of play by Shakespeare? Said Mary.

There are just like our Shea. Have you seen the Shea here? In Ireland?

Mary! Augusta said impatiently. Not yet. Said Annie.

That's a shame. Said Mary. I have seen them. This is a true story.

She looked at Jack and smiled.

With facts you might want to read and write them down.

Oh, sure. Said Jack.

He put his notebook and pencil out of his pocket, Augusta seemed

surprised. Mary leaned closer to Jack and Annie again, her eyes
were shining her voice was hushed,

One day, long ago, a lonely young girl took a walk in old forest, said
Mary. All was still, until joyful music began coming from a hidden
world.

Jack loved Mary's way of telling her story. He wrote down, old forest,
all still, joyful music, hidden world.

Augusta frowned.

So I guess you can write, she muddled.

Suddenly there came a spinning wind, said Mary, and clouds so
bright, and beam of light poured over the river,

Jack quickly wrote: spinning wind, break cloud, beam of light. River.

Then they came, rambling and thundering, exclaimed Mary.

Mary! Said Augusta.

She sounded impatient.

But Mary kept talking.

Sounds with winds, some on the horses of white, queens and kings
in row the gangs of color of summer, for winter and spring!

Jack wrote: sound with winds, white horses, queens, kings, ...

Then gallop the circle of blinding swirl... said Mary,

They swept up the lonely girl and carried her cross the river to the
secret hollow hole. As she's gone inside, she and wood become

very small, and see many wonder sites.

Jack wrote:

Take lonely girl, hollow hole of Shea, wonder sites.

Jack looked up from his notebook waiting for Mary to go on. when she spoke again, her voice was very soft

But the girl grew afraid, and ran home instead, ...

Mary set back on her chair, and closed her eyes, the only sound in the cottage was the crackling of the fire, and the pinning of the rain, into the tin buckets.

Mary? Annie said softly.

Are you the girl of the story?

Mary opened her eyes/

I will never tell she said.

Oh, Mary. Said Augusta. Such tales.

She turned to Jack and Annie,

Mary still believes in impossible.

i.

I do.

I surely do. Said Mary. Every night I leave a bit of milk on my window for the Shea, I leave clumps by door and they eat them too.

Mary, the birds eat the clumps. Said Augusta.

Yes, the birds are hungry also. Said Mary. But the Shea picked over the clumps first. At twilight they still crossed the river from their hidden hollow holes just as the fisherman come to go away. (of county Gore away), as the farmers and nurse maids.

Augusta shook her head sadly

Mary. Only simple minded folks still believe in such things. She said. educated people know what is true and what is not true.

No child said Mary.

They only know what they think is true.

Augusta straightened her shoulders,

Well, we should be going now, Mary. She said. so could you please tell these children truth about me now?

Yes. Said Mary.

She turned to Jack and Annie,

Do you children have names?

Jack smiled. This is the first time today anyone had asked their names.

Yes. Our name is Jack and Annie. said Annie.

Well, Jack and Annie, thank you for coming to visit me today. I can tell you're very special. Said Mary.

What about me? Mary? Augusta asked. Am I special?

Yes, child. You are. Said Mary.

She turned to Jack and Annie, Augusta is special too, but in the different way.

How am I different? Mary/ asked Augusta.

You try very very hard to be good, you are very smart, but you, Mary stopped.

What Mary? I what/ said Augusta.

You are not happy. Said Mary. And that breaks my heart.

Augusta's eyes filled with tears,

Oh, Augusta don't cry. Said Annie.

She reached out to take Augusta's hand, but the girl stepped back, Augusta wiped her eyes.

That's silly I am happy enough. I know I've never seen the Shea, and I never will but I don't care anymore. And if you like these miserable children more than me, Mary, well , that is fine.

Augusta ran to the door and opened it.

The dump air swiped inside as she rushed out of the cottage.

Through the open doorway, Jack and Annie could see Augusta's red cape flying behind her.

Chapter 6: a late winter daydream

Jack sighed

Their mission really seemed hopeless now.

We'd better go to find her said Annie.

She wont go far. Said Mary. My poor Augusta. She has a fine mind and a brave heart, but she is so unhappy,

Why is she so unhappy? Asked Annie.

Yeah, what is her problem? Said Jack

More than any of her brothers, and sisters, miss Augusta loved my stories, said Mary.

Remembered everyone of them she did.

Really? Asked Jack.

Yes. She will repeat them back to me word for word. Said Mary.

That's amazing. Said Annie.

She love the stories so much, but she grew desperate to see the Shea for herself. Said Mary. L

At night she will carry a lantern and crossed the fields calling for them, by day, she popped them in every part of the farm, and she even used a magnifying glass scaring the earth for tiny footprints.

But I am afraid she has never found them

Why said Annie.

Mary sighed.

Because she looked for them with her head, and not her heart.

She said.

Eventually she gave up and stopped searching. She didn't even want to hear the stories anymore, she's been a dutiful but a sorrowful child ever since.

That's terrible. Said Annie.

What can we do to help her?

There's only one thing you can do. Said Mary.

What ? breathed Jack.

Mary leaned forward on from her chair , her blue eyes seemed staring right through Jack and Annie, you must show her the magic. She said.

What? Thought Jack.

Does Mary know about the magic tree house?

What do you mean? He asked.

I know you children are like me, you see things that others don't. said Mary.

Hope Augusta can see them too.

Hope her find the magic in the fields. And in the forest.

For a moment, Jack and Annie didn't say anything, the wind blew through the open door, the fire crackled, then Annie took a deep breath,

Ok. She said.

We know exactly what to do.

We do? Said Jack.

Yeah. We will talk about it outside. Said Annie.

Thanks Mary.

We will find Augusta and take her to see everything.

Jack and Annie stood up to go,

Want you 20 fairies on this wonderful winter day? Said Mary.

Want 20 of them to you too. Said Jack.

Then he and Annie left the cozy cottage. Scattering the wind birds, by the front door.

It had be a little warm outside, the rain had stopped. But folk hang heavily to the sheep fields. The ground was sulky with mud, Jack could barely make out Augusta's red cape through the fog. She was cross the lame, sitting on a stone wall, at the edge of the sheep meadow.

Mary was right, she didn't go far. Jack said.

So how do we show her magic Annie?

Easy. Said Annie.

We play our magic with her.

So?

No. we can't do that. Said Jack. We supposed to say the whistle for moment of great danger.

That moment is now. said Annie, come on.

Hold on. said Jack.

What great danger we facing right now?

Not us Augusta! Said Annie.

She faces the great danger of losing all hopes, and happiness and boring inside for the rest of her life. And will never been inspired and never showing her gifts to the world.

It's almost late already!

Ok, ok, said Jack.

But we just going to go up twins and blowing the whistle and singing ?

That seems pretty weird.

Hmm. Yeah. It does. Said Annie.

How about this? said Jack.

We will tell Augusta, that we want to put on a play for her.

A play? Said Annie.

Yeah. Said Jack.

We can tell her we want to prove that we won't lie. That we really worked in a play by Shakespeare.

Oh! Cool. Said Annie. then what?

We will play the magic whistle. Said Jack.

We will sing about the Shea,

We make them appear like in Mary 's story,.

Gallop and thundering,

Augusta sees them and she gets inspired.

Our mission's down.

Perfect. Said Annie. let's go.

Jack and Annie hurried across the lane, to the stone wall.

Excuse us, miss Augusta. Said Annie.

We just had a really great idea , want hear it?

Augusta didn't answer. She kept staring at the ground,

How do you like to see a play? Said Jack.

Augusta looked up. A play? She said.

We want to put on our own play for you. Said Annie.

Why: said Augusta.

Because it's really good. Said Jack.

And maybe it will prove to you that we are really well at play by

Shakespeare .

Augusta looked dullful.

Come on, you'll love it. Said Annie.

Do you know a quiet spot where no one can bother us?

Augusta bit her lips and looked around.

Then she stood up.

Alright. She said.

The river near the old forest. I used to go there with my brothers.

Great. Said Annie.

Annie and Jack followed Augusta through the rain-soaked misty meadow

They walked past greasing sheep, then down a slope toward a wide Russian river. Rushing

The river separated the sheep's meadow from the old forest.

Jack could barely see the trees through the ghostly fog.

Augusta stopped at a low ridge above the river bank, near some large rocks,

Here, she said.

Good! These rocks can be a stage. Said Jack.

Jack and Annie climbed a pile of small boulders, and stood at a large flat rock.

Ok! Said Annie.

The name of this place is :

A late winter's daydream.

Not bad. Thought Jack.

And this is what's going to happen. Said Annie.

Jack will be the narrator, and I will play the Irish whistle,

And Jack will sing a song and tells the story.

What? Said Jack.

Excuse us a minute. Miss Augusta.

Jack turned to Annie,

Why me sing? He whispered.

Why not I play and you sing?

No, I want to play. Said Annie.

You took notes of Mary's, right?

So just say if your words to describe the scene. Then use your notes about the Shea to make up a song.

You can do that, can't you?

I guess. Said Jack.

Cool. Said Annie. give me the whistle.

Jack reached his pocket and pulled out his notebook and Irish whistle. He gave the whistle to Annie,

Sorry, miss Augusta. Said Annie.

We are almost ready. She whispered directions to Jack.

Ok! Say your introduction. I will start to play. Then you start to sing,
then I've got it. Said Jack.

Let's just start.

Jack and Annie turned to face Augusta, Jack cleared his throat,
then he spoke a loud voice,

All lives still in the old forest, until music songs from my hidden
world,

Jack nodded to Annie. Annie raised the magic Irish whistle to her
lips and began to play. Strange sweet music came from the whistle,
the music was both sad and happy, it was full of beauty and hope,
pain and sorrow, like the fog over the river, the music seemed to
bring everything together.

For a moment, the whistle music was so powerful that Jack couldn't
sing, he felt like cry and laughing at the same time. Finally he
looked down at her notes, and began to sing:

In the spinning of light,

In the cloud like a dream,

A bridge appeared over
a wide flowing stream.

Jack surprised himself. He thought his words for the song sounded pretty good.

A long flattering high note, first from Annie's whistle, bright dancing light floated across the river, the light arched through the fog toward Jack, Annie and Augusta.

Augusta gasped.

Jack looked back down at his notes. And sang:

Some came on horses
Some came with wings,
From enchanted world
Little queens little kings,

The wind began to blow, Jack looked up. The leaves and grass and twigs were flying everywhere, the whistle music grew wilder, thundering and rumbling sounds came from the old forest.

A herd of very small horses galloped out of the mist, on their backs were proud and lovely riders. Many gold men and women with long

hair floating on the wind,
their knives and guns with colors of nature. The Pale rose of spring
dawn.. the green of summer humming birds, the blue of winter
twilight, and gold of autumn leaves.

The Shea!

Cried Augusta.

Chapter 7: really

Hundreds of Shea swarmed over the bright bridge. Behind the
galloping riders, more Shea came flapping on winds like
butterflies.

Augusta stood up as if intrans, her hands casted over her heart.

Oh!

Whoa! Breathed Annie.

Keep playing. Shouted Jack.

Annie blew into the whistle again,

The Shea flew in gallop along the white grassy bank. Their horses

flit as the wind, they had arched necks, and flinging eyes.

They moved faster and faster, swirling into a blending circle of light and color

The sorrowing sounds of the music inspired Jack's sorrow with his words too. He looked at his notebook and sang;

In the swallow they live

So wild so free

With the lonely girl

To the hell of the Shea

Jack, no! shouted Annie.

A mighty blast of wind, nearly blew Jack and Annie off their rock, they crouched down and covered their heads, when the wind grew calm, they stood up.

Just in time to see the swollen cloud of light vanished back to the old forest, the Shea were gone.

Once again, sky blended with water and earth and will of the silver mist.

Woo. Jack said breathless.

That was amazing.

Jack? Do you know what you just did?

Yeah. I made the Shea appear and disappear. Jack said.

I used my notes from Mary's story, just like we've planed.

Yes. You did that. Said Annie. and you made Augusta disappeared too.

What/ said Jack.

The Shea took Augusta! Said Annie. I tried to stop you, but it was too late. You've already sound those words.

What words? Said Jack.

You sang:

In the swallow they live

So wild so free

With the lonely girl

To the hell of the Shea

Said Annie.

I was just reading from my notes. Said Jack.

They took Augusta? Are you sure?

Yes. She's gone. Said Annie.

Oh, no! said Jack.

He and Annie ran to the ridge above the river,

Augusta! He shouted.

There was no sign of Augusta's red cape anywhere.

See? She's gone. Said Annie.

It's all my fault! Said Jack.

You couldn't help yourself. Said Annie.

But I am responsible. Said Jack, we have to get her back..

Maybe Mary can help us. Said Annie.

She?

Wait, listen! Said Jack.

What's that song

Squeaking noises were coming from behind the pile of small boards, it's sounded as if someone was trying to play the magic whistle. But the song was definitely not magical.

The whistle, I must drop it. Said Annie.

Maybe it's Augusta. Said Jack.

Jack and Annie ran back and looked over the rocks.

A man no higher than Jack's knee was blowing into the whistle. The man wore green Jacket, and three cornered red cap with white feather. He had big ears, a bushy red beard, skinny little legs and silver buckles on his shoes.

Oh man! Said Jack.

A Leprechaun, whispered Annie

A leprechaun ?

Jack and Annie just stared at Leprechaun, as he blew into the whistle. His small bonny fingers danced over its six holes. But only squeaks, chirps and hollow twitting sounds came out.

The Leprechaun blew harder and harder, then he stopped. He turned the whistle over and looked at it closely. He shook his head and frowned.

Hello! Said Annie.

The Leprechaun jumped and looked up.

Well hello yourself? He said greening.

You startled me. You will take this back and it's no use to me, as you can play at here.

The little man held up the whistle

Jack reached over the rock and took it. He slipped it back into the pocket of his coat.

Listen. We need your help. Said Jack. Our friend...

Oh , you human always say in such a hurry? The Leprechaun said

Sorry. Said Jack. But we really need you to help us , you see...

First of all, who are you? The Leprechaun asked.

I am Jack, she's my sister Annie. said Jack. Our friend...

Ah, well then Jack and your sister Annie, I am Willy. Said the Leprechaun

And let's get a few things to try it away. Never call me little Willy or tiny Willy. I don't like it and never ever call me will Willy. That's the one I hate them most.

Ok, fine. Said Jack. But..

Jack! Let me handle this. said Annie.

She turned to the Leprechaun,

Willy, why didn't you go back over the river with the Shea?

Ask me why I came over the river in the first place? I will tell you the answers to your both questions, said Willy

Ok! Why did you come over the river in the first place, Willy? And , why didn't you go back across over the Shea? Said Annie

Answer no.1

I was having a bit of nap in the reeds when I heard the whistle play. Said Willy. Before I knew it I was moving with the Shea, I crossed the bridge, probably you didn't see me, lost in the swirl of things I was.

Excuse me, started Jack, ...

I've hear a whistle play, Willy said. but yours miss, was like a nana never heard from human, not in the 900 years of my life, so, answer

no.2...

I didn't go back over the river, because I wanted to find the secret of you play.

Well, that's easy, said Annie, the whistle played itself, it wasn't me.

Ah.. you're smartest girl. Said Willy. And you like to keep the secret of your talents to yourself.

No. really. Said Annie.

Listen! Willy. Jack broke in.

Can you help us , we lost our friend Augusta. It was my fault, I sang about the lonely girl then she was taken by the Shea.

Yes. I saw that. Said Willy. Wish the way she was.

So I guess now, you want me to help you find her, isn't that?

Yes. That's it. Said Jack.

We will going to ask Mary sharing to help us. Said Annie.

But you probably know the way better than...

Wait, a minute! Said Willy.

Did you say Mary Sheridan?

You know Mary? Said Annie.

Know her. Said Willy. Grinning from ear to ear.

Well, if I were four feet, taller I would marry Mary Sheridan years ago.

Really? Said Annie.

Oh, yes. She is a very good friend. Said Willy. You see, I lived where you might call the in between. I have one foot, in the magical world of Shea, and I have one foot, in the mortal world of human like Mary.

Ah! Lovely Mary.

Yeah! Mary's great. Said Jack, but now, ...

You want me to get your missing friend. Said Willy.

Right, right. Said Jack.

I can do that. But what will you gift me for it? said Willy,

What do you mean? Asked Jack.

What will you give me for helping you find your friend? My time is very valuable, you know. Said Willy.

We don't really have anything. Said Jack.

We're poor and miserable. Said Annie.

I can see that. Said Willy. Alright, then , how about this? I will lead you to your friend, and you teach me how to play the whistle the way you played. Well enough?

Sorry. I ...said Annie.

Deal. Jack broke in.

Jack! Said Annie.

Annie, it's a deal. Jack said. he was ready to promise anything to save Augusta.

Good. Said Willy.

I love to play like that for Mary someday. Now the path I am about to show you, very very secret you must never show any other living songs.

Of course not. Jack said.

Then come with me. Said Willy.

And now I will lead you across the water to the home of Shea.

Chapter 8: the hallow hole

The Leprechaun squabbled down the steep bank of the river, Jack started to follow and Annie grabbed him,

Jack, the whistle won't work for Willy. She said.

I know said Jack. We worried about that later. Right now we just have to save Augusta. Come on!

Jack and Annie hurried after Willy, to the wide rushing river,

How do we get cross? Jack asked.

Follow me along the river. Said Willy. And I will show you. Step lightly.

Willy stepped to head them along the river bank, Jack and Annie followed. Jack tried to step lightly, but it was impossible. Sloping through the mud, his boots filled with mud, and made squishing sounds with every step.

The river grew narrower and narrower, twisting and turning like a snake, the mist grew thicker until Jack could hardly see anything. He bumped at Willy almost knocking him over.

Careful! Lad! Said Leprechaun.

Sorry. Said Jack.

Alright. Said Willy. Here we will cross, hop from stone to stone after me.

Willy disappeared into the mist, crossing the river, Annie followed him, Jack started across too. He tried to hop carefully from stone to stone, but the stones were slippery, on his third hop, his boot slid off the mossy rock and he splashed into the freezing water.

Jack ! are you ok! Annie called out a loud whisper.

Yeah! I am fine. Jack said.

He scrambled up. His clothes were soaked and heavy, he really was miserable now. He waited at other side of the river, and joined Annie and Willy.

Ah.. you fell in. said Willy.

That happened sometimes.

Come with me now, into the forest.

Jack, Annie and Willy walked under the trees, they passed old oaks and maples and crick in the wind, Jack shivered in his soaking wet clothes, a big black crow called from the high bear branch, Willy jumped then laughed,

As! This is probably Patrick daily. He said

Rover is the Shea changed them into a crow for silly and parrot high queen shoes.

Changed them into a crow? Said Jack

Willy nodded.

One of the Sheas favored the tricks, he said, change a human and displeased them to animals.

Oh! Said Jack.

A white rabbit scabbed through the forest.

That's bunny over there. Is not dow the formal miss shanmakati.

She was rude to the high king, said Willy.

Rude to the high king/ said Jack.

He was starting to feel like he was trapping in a nightmare

The Shea can not bear the rule of human. Said Willy

Look there! He pointed to a frown, kicking out from behind fur tree.

Ah...it's so cute. Said Annie.

Cute/ maybe. Maybe not. Said Willy.

Could easily be old John Folly. I heard he was changed with just a bit of grouch. Come on!

Willy led Jack and Annie through the forest, until they came to a tangle of briars and grumbles, the hollow hole of the Shea like just beyond the stick. He said to them.

Do you still with the girl infantine friend?

Yes. Jack and Annie both whispered.

Then all of you go.

And good luck to you. Said Willy taping his head.

What, aren't you coming with us? Said Jack.

Oh, my..no.. said Willy.

The Shea will be fiercely knowing I show humans passed the house of their hiding places. And I certainly don't want to live the rest of my life as a weasel.

But won't they be angry at us for finding their secret hiding place/ said Jack.

Possibly. Said Willy.

Here is what I recommend you to do.

Politely tell the high king, and high queen, did you just come looking for your dear friend and to take back to her loving family. The Shea placed very great value on friendship and family.

Ok! Said Jack.

Friendship and family.

And remember, be simple, direct and honest at all times. Said Willy.

simple, direct and honest

repeated Jack.

And polite. That's the most important. Very very polite. Said Willy.

Very polite. Said Annie. got it

Another thing, said Willy, in the world of Shea, the old tales still live.

So don't afraid if you see Odessa floating about, there are just bits of pieces of old stories,

Now, go, be simple, direct, honest and polite, and save your dear friend before she's lost forever.

Thanks! Willy. Said Annie.

Best of luck! Said Willy.

See you later. Said Jack.

Yah, I will be waiting for you. Said the Leprechaun.

Jack and Annie crouched down, and started through the thicket.

Thrones and briers pulled Jack's wet coat, they scratched his hands, and got hot in his ears. Jack battled his way through the tangle of brush unto he caught up with Annie.

They both pushed their way out of the thicket and stepped into a glade.

Whoa! It's like Mary said. whispered Annie.

It is like summer here.

No rainfall, no wind blow. Warm sunshine shone on the evergreen glade. In the middle of the glade, was a large grassy mound. At the foot the mound, was a small doorway, fringed by stones.

That must be it. The hollow hole. Said Jack.

The secret home with Shea.

And that must be someone from the all story. Whispered Annie.

She pointed to a woman floating above the green mound, the woman was wearing the flowers on her head, and carried a branch with silver apples. She vanished in sunny heights.

Whoa! Whispered Jack.

A small sailing ship appeared in the air, it had white sails and flags flying. The ship too vanished

Then an old woman spinning and spinning appeared and a wispy dragon. Then the knight with sword, the prayed images faded into

the sunshine. Like wisps of smoke.

Wha..said Jack.

Listen. Said Annie.

The sound of drumming was coming from the doorway of grassy mound,

Come on, let's look inside said Annie.

Jack and Annie snaggled close to the small doorway it was not higher than Jack's waist, he and Annie knelt down, and peered inside

The hollow hole was filled with pale green light. Very small dancers, none of them than 8 inches tall, waved in the light. As drummers punted tiny drums, the dancers danced together in rows. They held their arms straight by their sides, and kicked their legs and turned around, around to the rhythm of the drums.

A small shinning couple set on high golden chairs, watching the dancers. They wore golden crowns.

They must be the high king and high queen. Whispered Annie.

Jack and Annie watched, until the rows of dancers parted. Then they could see a third person, watching the dance. She was no taller than the dancers, dripped around her shoulders, was a red cape.

It's Augusta! Said Annie.

Chapter 9: skunks or weasels

Augusta! Whispered Jack. She's she's tiny!

They must have shrunk her. Whispered Annie.

Ha . whispered Jack.

He crawled the way from the door, Annie crawled after him, they pressed their back against the grassy mound,

Why are we hiding? Asked Annie.

We can't let them see us. Said Jack. They might shrink us too.

But how are we going to see Augusta? Asked Annie.

I don't know. Said Jack.

Hi! I just remember something. Said Annie. didn't Mary say the girl the story? While she will come small if she goes inside the hollow hole?

Yes, she did. Said Jack.

So maybe that mean you can only get shrunk if you going inside.

Right. Said Annie. so let's go back to the doorway and call from outside.

we will be simple, direct honest and very politely, like Willy said. we will tell king and queen we've coming to take our friend back to her family.

But wait a minute. Said Jack. How can she go back to her normal

life with her family? If she's only 8 inches tall.

Good point. Said Annie. this is so weird. Said Jack.

Let's worry about her height later. Said Annie. for now, we just have to help her escape.

Right. Said Jack. Let's try.

Jack and Annie crawled back to the entrench of hollow hole, and peeked inside,

In the pale green light, a very small Augusta, still watching the dancers.

Excuse us, please. Annie called.

The drumming stopped. The dancers froze. All eyes turned to Jack and Annie. the high king and high queen looked startled.

Who are you? The king called, how did you find us/

That's not important. Said Annie.

We are very sorry to bother you.

But we come to get our very dear friend Augusta. We have to take her back to her very loving family. Please. Thank you. Added Jack trying to be polite.

Before the king and queen could speak, Augusta rushed forward,

No, I don't want to go home! She screamed in her high little voice,

I don't want to leave the Shea!

Whoa! Said Jack.

That was surprised. Maybe Augusta was under some spell?

Leave here at once! The high king commanded Jack and Annie in a screechy voice. You are not invited. You have no business here.

Yes. We are leaving right way, but Augusta has to come with us.

Annie called.

Thank you, she's right. Said Jack.

Augusta has to come with us, please! Thank you!

No. I want to stay here. Said Augusta. I am not good for anything at home, Mary was right, I am not happy there,

Jack was amazed, Augusta wasn't under spell, she really wanted to stay with Shea!

The girl will stay with us! The high king shouted, go now! now!

No way! Jack boozed out. We won't leave without Augusta.

The crowd gasped.

What/ roared high king.

Sorry, sorry, said Jack come in.

You will pay for this rudeness. The king yelled.

Before Jack and Annie could get away, the king thrust out his arms, sparkles flew from the tips of his tiny fingers, suddenly Jack and Annie couldn't move their arms or legs, the king kept pointing at them,

Skunks! he shouted at the crowd, or weasels!

Neither, please. Thank you! Shouted Jack.

He was glad he still could talk, but the crowd began chanting, in strange high voices,

Skunks! Skunks! Skunks! Skunks! Skunks!

The king nodded, and raised his both arms into the air, Jack was despaired, he didn't want to live the rest of his life as a skunk.

Wait, please. Jack shouted, I'm sorry I was rude, before you change us, I really really need to tell Augusta something, thank you.

The king looked at Jack for a long moment, then he lowered his arms, and the crowd grew silent,

Thank you! Said Jack.

Augusta! Listen to me.

You should go back home, you are good for lots of things back there. You are very kind, and Mary says you have a brave heart and fine mind, those are really good things to have.

Tears rolled down from Augusta's cheeks, she shook her head,

Listen to me, please! Jack went on:

Mary says you are not happy but some things do make you happy Augusta. You said you feel close to nature, you said you love simple folk like Mary, and I know you love stories, too.

Mary said you remembered every story she told you, you used to tell her yourself, word for word, you have a great memory.

He is right. Augusta. Yelled Annie.

Those are your gifts. You need to give your gifts to the world.

Augusta was still for a moment, then she shook her head,

I want to stay. She said.

You have a lot of to say. The high king shouted at Jack and Annie.
now prepare to become skunks.

He raised his arms again

Oh, no! thought Jack.

Wait, faint fare, said the high queen.

The high queen stepped closer to Augusta, the queen wore silver cloak, glitter with diamonds, she had jewels in her long red hair, that shone like stars. Her high clear voice ran like a bell:

I am queen Ann of the Shea. She said.

The boy said you love stories, and do you remember every story you heard? Is this true?

Augusta nodded.

Then listen to our story. Said queen Ann.

All the Shea were very still, watching Augusta, and their queen.

In the morning of time, out of the rosy sky, and windy light we came.

Said queen Ann.

We were trifle super-natural people, called too hot day down in it.

Strong fearless noble we were, five rules carried our armies,
through the woody lands of Ireland and for the lyaz.

We ruled the Irish world.

But when the humans came, the wild woods gave away, to villagers
and pesters , our treaded hollow holes in ruling the force under the
sea. Over time we made ourselves smaller and smaller so we could
more easily hide from humans, eventually we became nosiest the
Shea. And we were mocked as the waffles of the fairy.

But in truth, we are a tribe of great heritage, and we lived in
enchanted places like this one protected by what is left for our
magic.

Do you understand?

I do! Yes. Grieved Augusta.

Our stories were passed on for centuries in old language of Ireland
but the old language was replaced by the English, the stories
began to fade away. Queen Ann said.

Go home now with your friends human child, go back for our sake.

Seek out all the old stories tellers and ask them to tell you the tales

of my people, learn the old language, read old manuscripts, write stories down on paper before they lost completely. Share them with all the people of Ireland, and all the world, will you do that for us? Will you use your gifts to tell us stories that we store our dignity.

Augusta's eyes shone,

Yes she said.

Yes I will, yes

Good, then I will send you all swiftly go home. Said queen Ann.

She backed to a small dancer, who stepped forward with tiny silver jellies,

Sip the honey jam of the Shea. Said the high queen.

She took the jellies and handed it to Augusta. Augusta took a sip, a second later, Jack felt cold and wind and rain.

He and Annie were standing on the bank of the river, Augusta was standing beside them. She was her normal size again.

Chapter 10: farewells

Well. That was simple and direct. Said Annie

Yeah. Jack felt dazed

Augusta looked at Jack and Annie,

I saw them, she said, her eyes are wide. I finally saw the Shea. I really saw them.

She burst out a laughing. Her laughter was so full of joy, then Jack and Annie started laughing, too.

I saw them, I saw them !

Augusta kept repeating, I saw the Shea, I know I have important things to do.

Yes, you do. Said Annie.

I must learn old language. And I must start gathering old stories at once. That was queen told me. Said Augusta. I can't wait to visit old storytellers like Mary Sheridan and Betty Earlier too. I will start with Mary. Let's go and see her right now. hurry! Will you come with me/ hurry!

Sure. Said Annie, but just a second.

She turned to Jack, what about Willy/

Who's Willy? Asked Augusta.

A friend of us. Said Jack looking around. He said he wait for us. But

where he's going to wait?

Willy?

Willy? Called Annie.

I guess he is still on the other side of the river. Said Jack.

That's too bad. Said Annie.

Yeah. Said Jack.

Come, let's go and see Mary now. said Augusta.

Grabbing Annie's hand and pulling her along,

Jack looked around for Willy one last time, he was sad about not seeing the Leprechaun again. But it was a little relief too. He knew he couldn't keep their part of the deal. Teaching Willy how to play the magic whistle.

Come on! Jack! Cried Augusta.

Jack followed the two girls through the meadow, over the stone walls and down the dirty lane, and cross the muddy field to Mary Sheridan's cottage.

Mary! Mary! Augusta called.

She dashed ahead Jack and Annie. she didn't even stop to knock.

She threw open the door to the cottage.

Ah! Oh! She said freezing in tracks,

Jack and Annie caught up with Augusta, and looked inside. Mary was sitting in front of her fire, next to her, was a small man wearing a green Jacket and three corner red cap with a white feather.

Willy! Cried Annie.

Annie and Jack hurried past Augusta into the cottage.

You are here. Said Jack.

Of course, I said I will wait for you. Said the Leprechaun.

I see you found your dear friend and brought her home. Good work!

Augusta still in the doorway, gazing at Willy.

Who are you? She asked.

My name's Willy. Just call me Willy. Said the Leprechaun.

As usual I will leave before you visit Mary. But now you've seen the Shea, an I suppose not to hiding from you anymore.

Ah.. are you real? Asked Augusta.

Who knows. Said the Leprechaun. Maybe I am real and you are not.

Depends on which one of us ask the question.

Everyone laughed.

Good point. Said Annie.

But we'd better be getting home . said Jack.

He wanted to leave before Willy asked him or Annie about his whistle lesson.

Jack took Annie's hand, and started backing toward the door,

Thanks for helping us, Willy he said.

Yeah. And thanks Mary, for everything. Said Annie. waving ,
goodbye. Augusta!

Goodbye everyone!

Wait just a minute! My friends! Said Willy.

Ah-oh! Thought Jack.

Have you forgotten our deal? Said Willy. My fingers are itch to
make beautiful music for Mary.

Well, you see..there is a problem with that. Said Jack squirming

A frown across Willy's face.

A problem? He said, how could there be a problem? Fairy friend,
teach Willy to play whistle.

Doesn't catch any simpler than that?

Right . said Jack.

Well, what's the problem? Asked Willy.

Well the whistle, Jack didn't know how to finish.

I will answer that question. Said Annie. Willy, I am going to be
simple and direct and honest with you.

Yes? Said Leprechaun.

Merlin the magician gave us the whistle to help our mission, said
Annie, the whistle is magic, and magic only works once, without the
magic, I don't really know how to play. So I can't teach you. There

you have it.

Ah...said Willy.

He looked at floor, and shook his head.

And I am afraid I am going to hop to turn you both into cheap
mocks,

What? Said Jack.

Willy burst out a laughing.

Joke, only joking. He said.

Merlin, you should have told me that you were friends with Merlin in
the first place.

Do you know Merlin? Asked Jack.

Oh, yes. We spent a great deal of time together. Must be about 800
years ago now. said Willy.

How is he?

He's happy. Said Annie.

Willy turned back to Mary and Augusta. I first met the master
magician on the island Merlin, in the Irish sea.

Wait, wait! Please Willy, said Augusta.

Mary, do you have pen and paper/

No, my dear, I am afraid I don't. said Mary.

I can help said Jack.

He took his pencil and small notebook from his pocket, he tore

some pages out of the notebook and then gave the pages and pencil to Augusta.

Here. He said.

Oh, thank you, Jack! Said Augusta.

She turned back to Willy, continue please...

Well, said Willy, Merlin was a few centuries old then and I was near that,

As Willy told his story, Augusta began to write, Jack put his notebook back to his pocket and nodded to Annie, she nodded back and two of them started toward the door.

Just as they were about to leave, Annie called out to the others,

Bye!

We have to go home now. said Jack.

Trip lightly! Said Willy.

Thank you for everything! Said Augusta.

One and twenty farewells. Said Mary.

Same to you, guys. Said Jack.

Then he and Annie slipped out the cottage, the rain was pouring again, and wind was blowing hard,

I think we've inspired Augusta. Said Annie.

Yeap. We've accomplished our mission, said Jack.

Now let's get out of here.

He couldn't wait to go home to get warm and dry.

Jack and Annie ran against wind, they climbed over the stone wall, then hurried down the lane, slipping and sliding in the mock, they ran across the soaked field, by the time they arrived the rope ladder, their clothes were kicked with mud.

Jack and Annie climbed into the tree house, Annie found Pennsylvania book in the corner, as wind blew through the window, she pointed to a picture of frog creek woods.

I wish we could go there. She said.

The wind blew harder, The tree house started to spin. It span faster and faster. Then everything was still. Absolutely still.

Chapter 11: Lady Gregory

Ah...sunshine. Said Jack

He closed his eyes, and saw the sunshine streaming through the tree house window.

And clean dry clothes. Murmured Annie.

She placed the Pennsylvania book back in the corner, Jack took the magic whistle out of his pocket, and placed it next to the book.

There, that's go home now. he said. I want to look on the internet for information about Augusta.

He started down the rope ladder,

Great idea! Said Annie, following down.

We can find out what happened to her.

Jack and Annie ran through the chilly frog creek woods, they crossed the street, and hurried up sparkling sidewalk to their yard.

They tramped through old snow to their porch, Annie opened the front door, and led way inside.

Hi! Jack called. We are back.

Hi! Their mom called from the kitchen. Did you have a nice break?

Yes, we did. Said Annie.

Good! Get back to your homework now. said their mom. So you can finish in time to go to the theater,

Ok! Called Annie.

She went to the computer desk and sat down.

What should I type? She asked Jack.

Jack pulled up a chair and sat beside her.

Well, we don't know her last name, he said. so try to go away.

Augusta and Irish stories.

Annie typed these words on the keyboard. Then hit enter.

There are lots of choices for different websites. Annie clicked on the first one. On the screen, was a black and white photograph of a woman, the caption under it said :

Lady Augusta Gregory

Look! It's her. Said Annie.

The woman on the screen was middle aged. But she still looked like Augusta. Her hair was partly neatly down the middle,

Jack read aloud from screen:

Lady Augusta Gregory was born in to a wealthy family, in Gore way Ireland in 1852. she wrote over 40 plays and many poems and

essays. She was the core founder of Abbey theater, and national theater of Ireland. Lady Gregory also learned old language of Ireland, and became well known for collecting Irish stories and legends and sharing them with the world.

Whoa! Said Annie.

Augusta did have a brave heart and a fine mind.

And she must like our play since she wrote 40 of her own and started own theater.

Yeah. Said Jack. She really turned out great.

This reminded them a question, she had asked themselves earlier.

I wonder I am good for.

I didn't know how to do anything on that Irish farm.

Me neither. Said Annie. but hardly any kids today know how to do that kind of stuff.

So what will we do if our machines or computers broke down? Said Jack.

We have to figure out how to grow potatoes and make our own clothes and milk cows. Said Annie.

I'll probably read some kind of instructions first and then give it a try.

Said Jack.

I probably give it a try first, said Annie. then I will read instructions.

Jack laughed.

I know some stuff good work for. Said Annie.

What/ said Jack.

First we are good for helping each other. Said Annie.

Yeah, but...said Jack,

No, really, we help each other all the time. Said Annie.

That's true. Said Jack.

And we are good for helping Augusta. Said Annie. and helping Louis Armstrong, Mozart, and Leprechaunnardo da Vinci. We put the smile on the Mona Lisa's face, remember?

Jack nodded.

Yeah. He said.

And we are good for saving an orphan penguin, a huge octopus, and city of Tokyo, Venice and New York! Said Annie.

We are good for rescuing a baby gorilla from a Leprechaunpard, a school kid from a twister,

We are good for helping Shakespeare, Claire Baton, and George Washington

We are good for rescuing two kids from a tsunami, coca cola boy from a buffalo campy, and a baby kangaroo and koala from a forest fire.

We are good for...

Wait, stop. Said Jack. Stop!

But that even not have of it. Said Annie.

I know said Jack.

That's plenty, I am inspired, I am ready to write a story for homework. And I will use my own experience. I have a little more than I thought.

Cool! Said Annie.

She went back to read about lady Gregory on her computer.

Jack grabbed the pencil and pulled out his notebook, he moved to the couch, and sat down, as late winter light slatted into the living room, he began to write.

The End