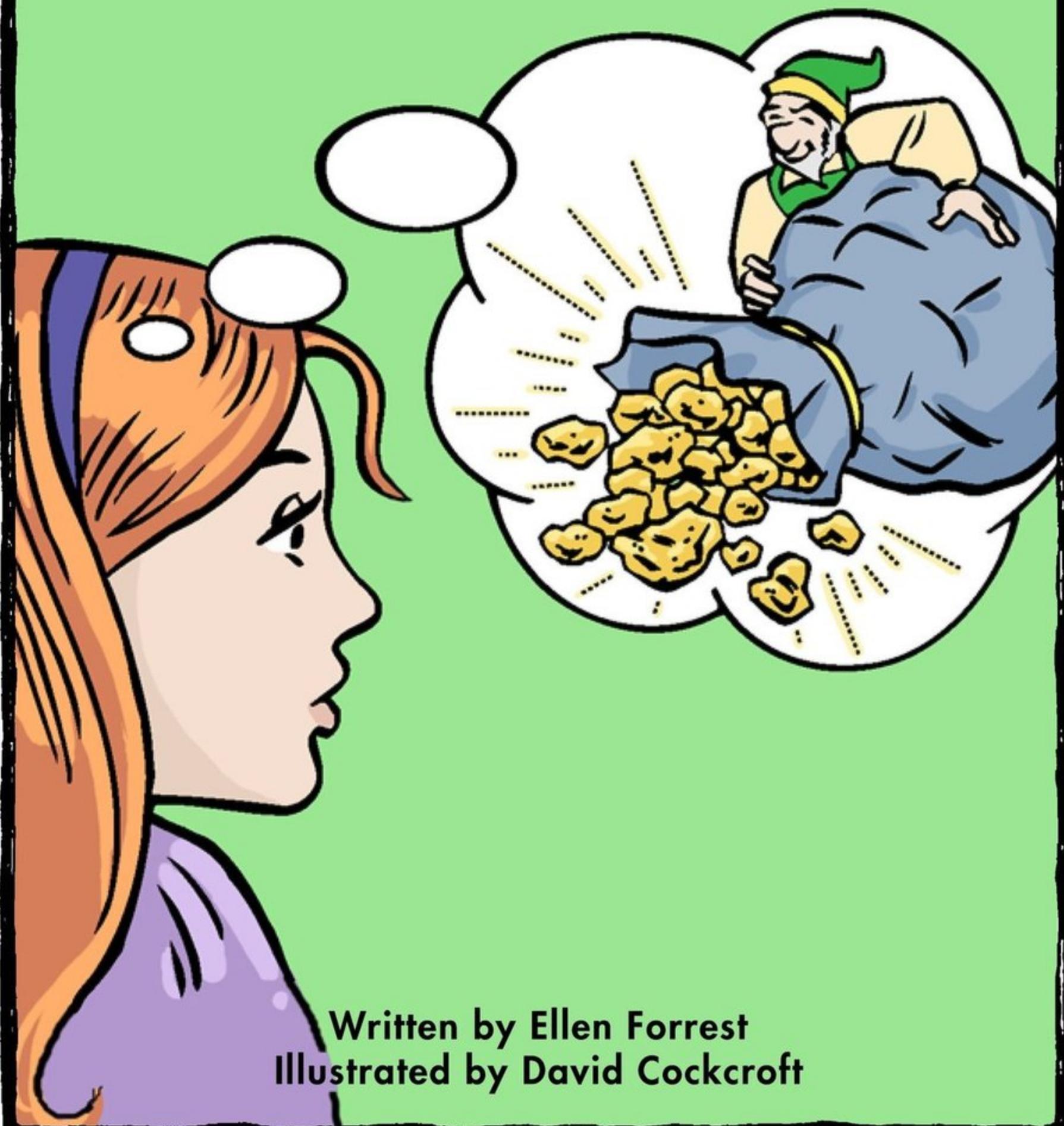


LEVELED BOOK • N

Colleen and the Leprechaun



Written by Ellen Forrest
Illustrated by David Cockcroft

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Table of Contents

Colleen Goes to Ireland.....	4
Jack Fox and the Leprechaun....	11
Glossary.....	16



Colleen Goes to Ireland

Colleen was so excited! She had never been to Ireland before. She had never even been on an airplane. Now she was here, landing in Dublin, Ireland's capital city.

Colleen and her parents were visiting her grandparents. She had never met them in person. She had only talked to them on the phone and seen them in family pictures.

As Colleen walked out of the airport, two strangers grabbed her and started hugging her. After a few seconds, she realized they were her grandparents!

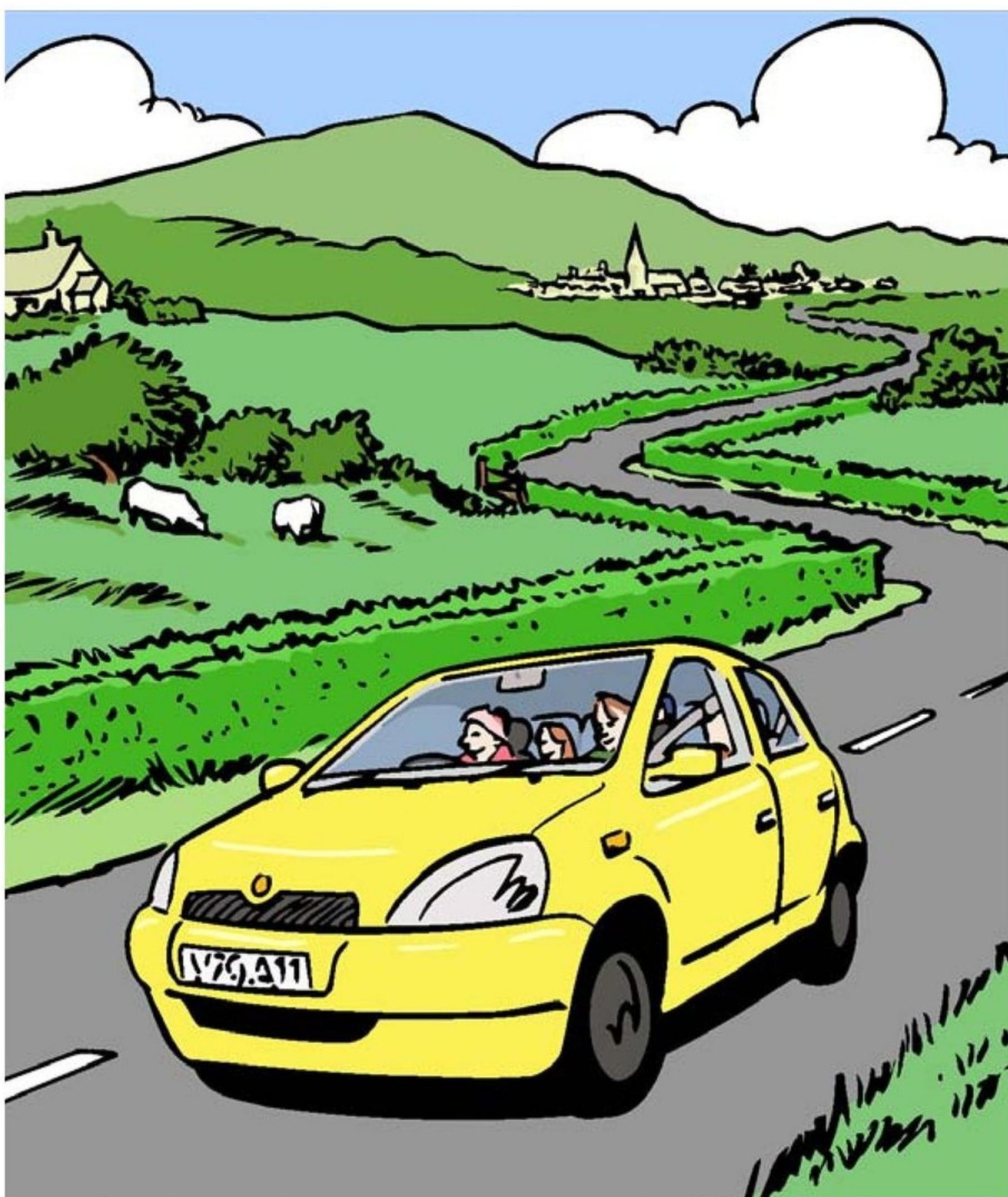




Colleen watched out the car window as the family drove by some fields. Her grandpa said **mysteriously**, “Colleen, be sure to keep an eye out for the little people.”

“Little people?” questioned Colleen.
“Who are the little people?”

“The little people are the fairies,” said Grandma as she drove. “Tales of the fairies go back to **Celtic** times in Ireland and Scotland. We have many **legends** and stories that tell about the fairies and their world.”





“Yes, we do,” said Grandpa.
“There are many kinds of fairies.
A leprechaun is one kind. He looks
like a small, old man. He is not
friendly, lives alone, and spends
most of his time making shoes.”

Colleen had heard about leprechauns before. “One of the great things about leprechauns,” continued Grandma, “is that each one keeps a pot of gold.”

“If you find a leprechaun, don’t take your eyes off him,” Grandpa warned.

“Legend says that if you keep your eyes on him the leprechaun will have to take you to his **treasure**,” Grandma continued.





“A long, long time ago,” Grandpa said, “a man named Jack Fox found out that leprechauns could be tricky fellows.”

“Tell me about Jack Fox,” said Colleen.

Grandpa began to tell the story:

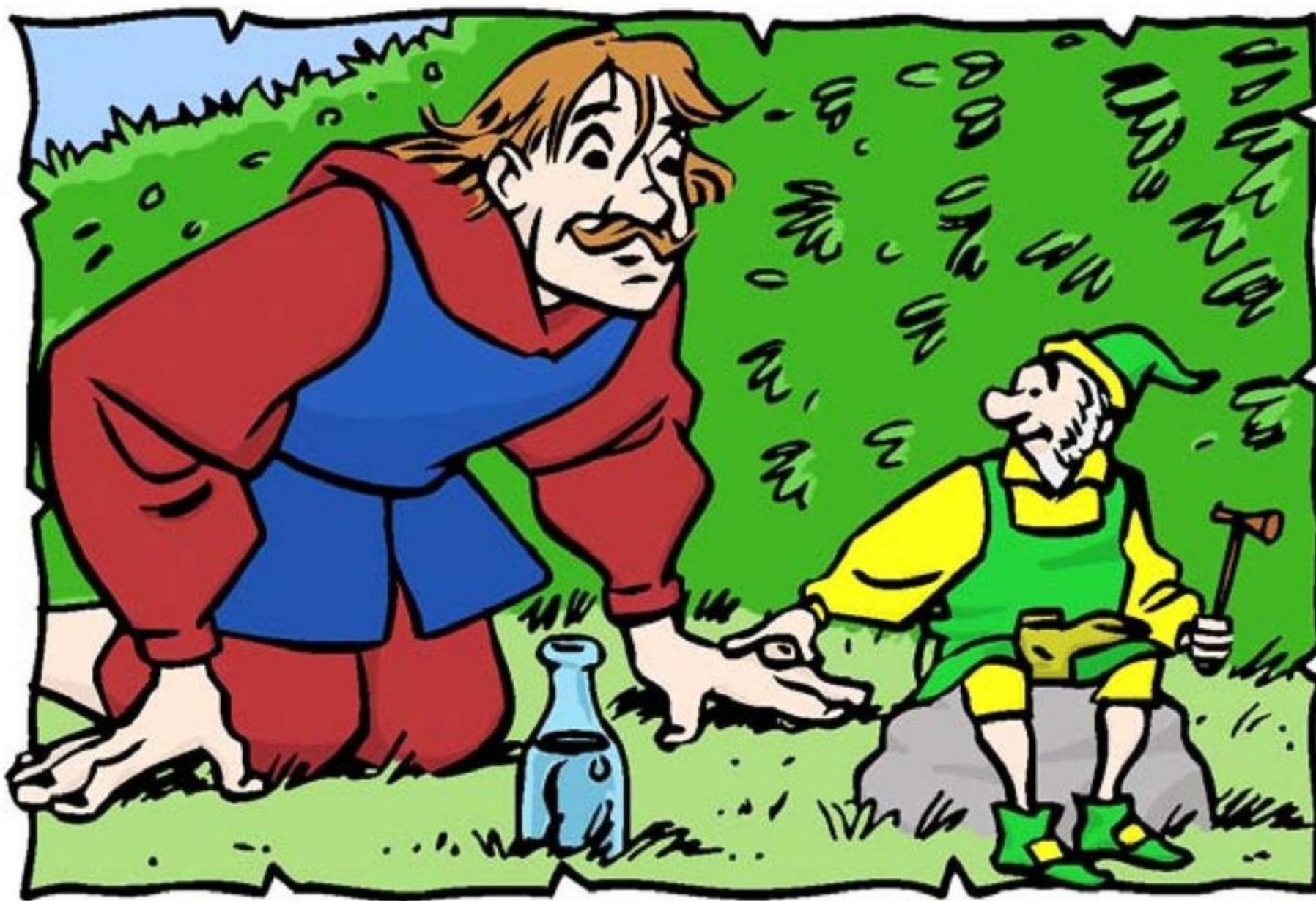
Jack Fox and the Leprechaun

Jack Fox was walking along the road when he heard a sound in the hedgerow.

He had a suspicion about what that noise might be and started to get very excited.

He peeked over the hedge and saw that his suspicion was true! There was a little man wearing a leather apron and a pointed hat. He was using a tiny hammer the size of a pin to shape a tiny golden shoe. Jack knew at once that he had found a leprechaun.





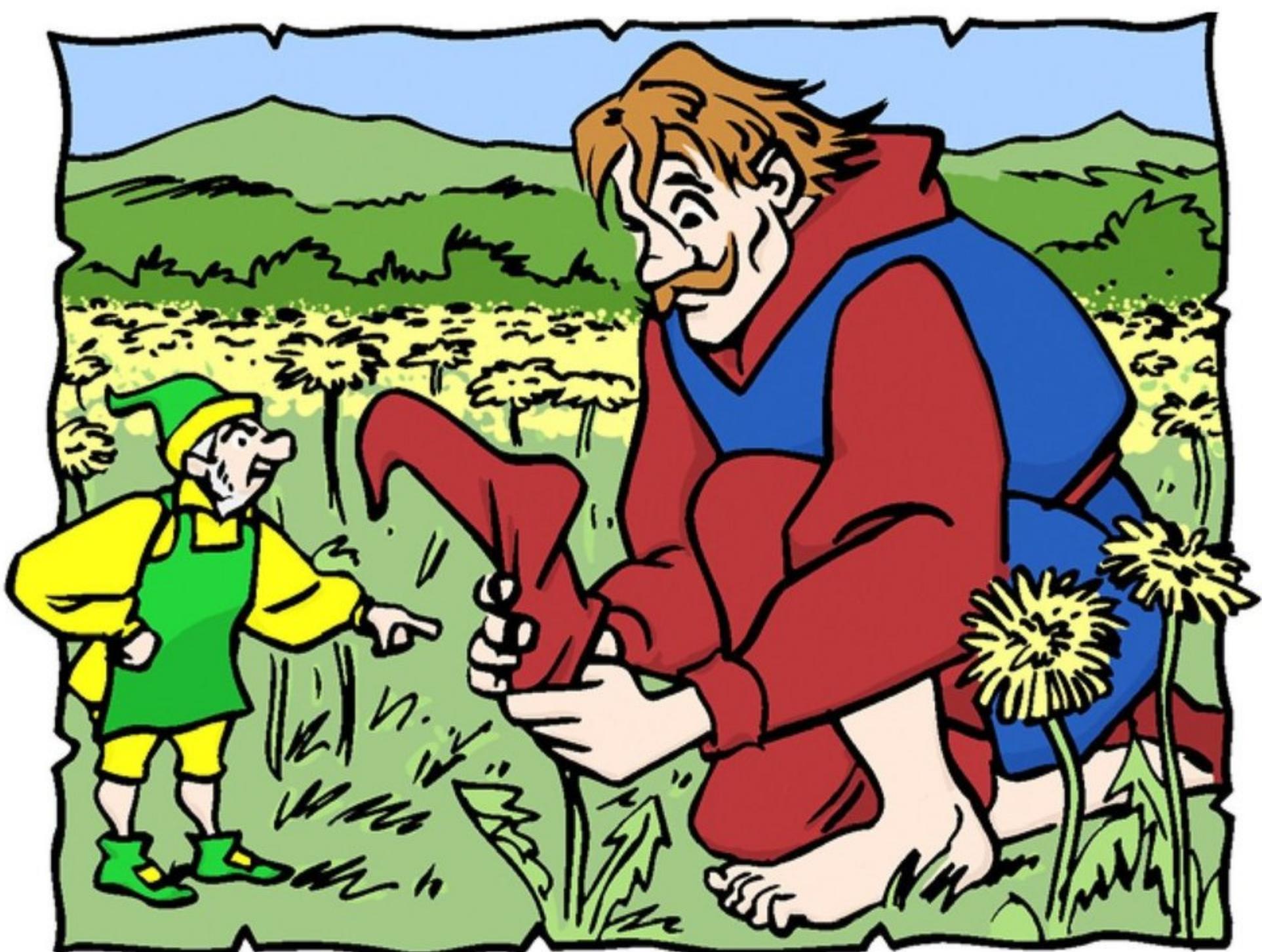
Jack crept close to the leprechaun and said good morning to him. The leprechaun smiled, said hello, and offered Jack a drink of water.

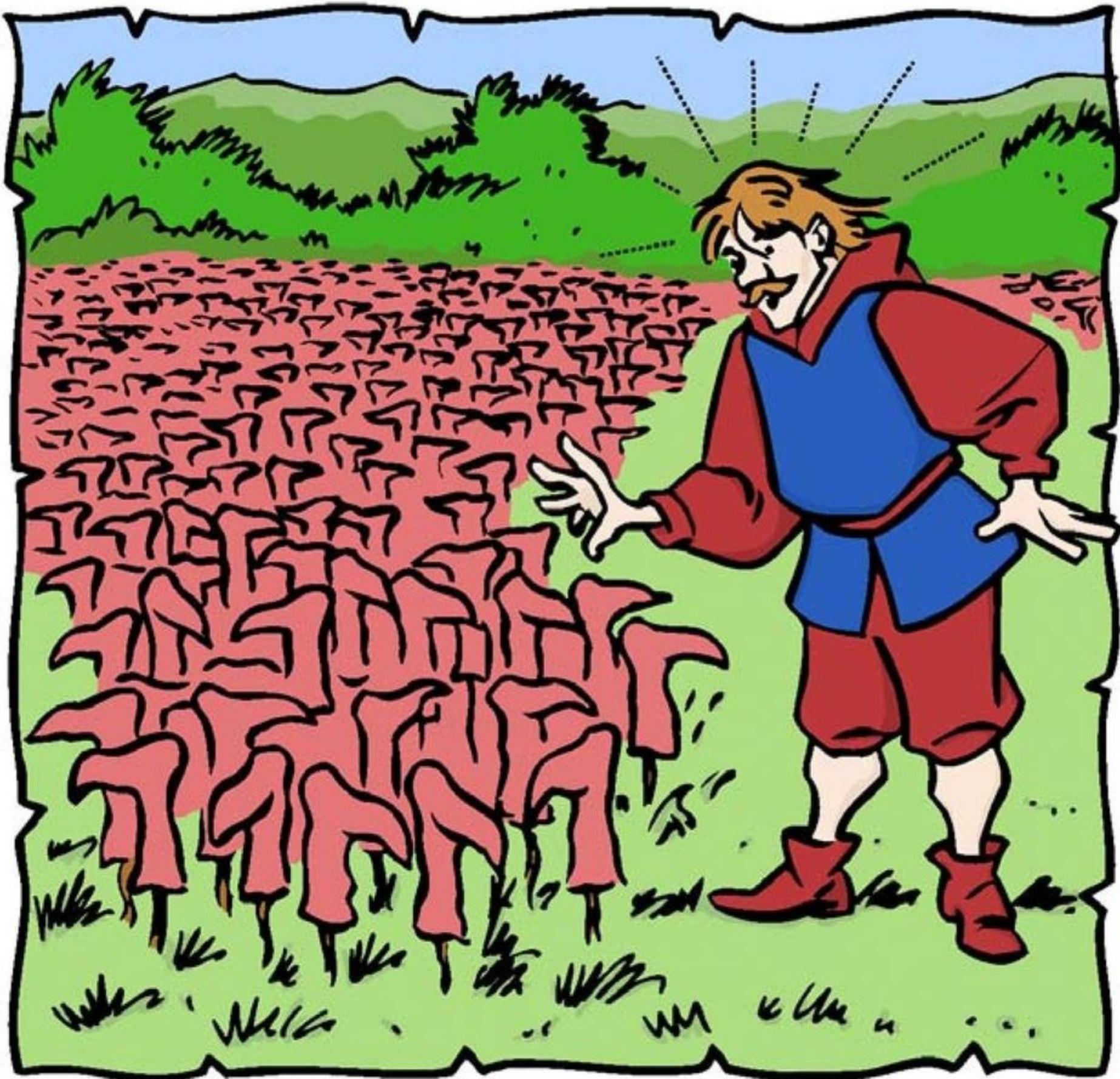
“Just hand me that bottle,” the leprechaun said, hoping Jack would look away. But Jack just stared straight at the leprechaun and said, “No, thank you.”

They talked for a while. The leprechaun tried many ways to trick Jack into looking away, but Jack wasn’t fooled.

Jack demanded that the leprechaun take him to a pot of gold. Finally, the leprechaun gave up trying to trick Jack and took him to a field of dandelions. He showed Jack the flower that the treasure was buried under, but Jack did not have a shovel.

Jack used one of his socks to cover the dandelion and mark the spot. Then, Jack went home to get a shovel.





When Jack came back, every dandelion in the field had a sock on it. He never did find the sock that marked the buried pot of gold.

Jack carried the socks home and told his wife what happened. She said that at least he would not need new socks for a while. Then they both started laughing.

Colleen and her parents started laughing, too.

"Imagine a field full of socks!" exclaimed Colleen. "What a funny story."

Colleen could see that she was going to like learning about Ireland from her grandparents. This would be a great visit!



Glossary

Celtic (<i>adj.</i>)	relating to ancient Irish, Scottish, and Welsh people (p. 7)
dandelions (<i>n.</i>)	a yellow-flowered plant with a white, fluffy seed head (p. 13)
hedgerow (<i>n.</i>)	a wall-like row of bushes or plants (p. 11)
legends (<i>n.</i>)	old stories that may not be true but continue to be told (p. 7)
leprechaun (<i>n.</i>)	a kind of fairy from Celtic legend (p. 8)
mysteriously (<i>adv.</i>)	in a strange manner that causes wonder or curiosity (p. 6)
suspicion (<i>n.</i>)	a belief or idea about something (p. 11)
treasure (<i>n.</i>)	valuable objects like money and jewels (p. 9)

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Fountas & Pinnell	M
Reading Recovery	20
DRA	28