

THE LEPRECHAUN WHO WISHED HE WASN'T



by Siobhán Parkinson, illustrated by Donald Teskey

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Laurence was fed up with being small, tired of sitting under rainbows guarding crocks of gold and sick of making endless shoes to replace those worn out by all the dancing at the crossroads. Laurence wanted to be a human being. So, when Phoebe invited him to stay in her house, he was delighted and vowed to become a Reformed Character. Soon he had replaced the green jacket and red cap with a brand new mega-cool denim outfit and had found himself an alternative career as a gremlin, an occupation which caused enormous problems for Phoebe and her family. But when Uncle Joe offers Laurence the chance of fame and fortune in America, he makes a surprising discovery about the value of true friendship.

LANGUAGE – ENGLISH

- ◆ Vocabulary extension: Reluctantly, tactfully, rummage, haughtily, primly.
- ◆ Descriptive language: 'A hippopotamus in a tutu' (p.21), leprechaunish, humming beings.
- ◆ Discussion: Stereotyping. Children discuss preconceived ideas of how other nationalities behave/dress/speak: Check trousers, loud voice (pp.62–68), 'Top o' the mornin'.
- ◆ Creative: Nicknames/pet names: Children suggest diminutives for common names.
- ◆ Story: Read *Larry, the Lonely Leprechaun* in *Everything Irish*, (pp.43–47), and compare the personalities of the two leprechauns.
- ◆ Story: Listen to and read *How the Leprechauns Came to Ireland* in *The Boyne Valley Book and Tape of Irish Legends*.
- ◆ Poetry: Children listen to readings of *The Stolen Child* by WB Yeats and *The Fairies* by William Allingham, with reference to pp.27, 33.

SESE – HISTORY

- ◆ My family: Discussing items used by parents/guardians when they were young. 'Children nowadays are only interested in the ozone layer and computer games' (p.24). Children compare current childhood pastimes with those of older generations.
- ◆ When my grandparents were young: Comparing lives of people in the immediate past with lives of people today. Discuss fashion (p.35) and dance (p.39).

SESE – GEOGRAPHY

- ◆ People at work: Investigating the work of local people. Discuss jobs on p.47, developing awareness of community interdependence.

SPHE

- ◆ Myself and others: How friends influence actions and decisions. Children discuss Phoebe's desire to be thin (pp.20, 21) and the advantages of healthy eating vs dieting (pp.59, 60).
- ◆ My friends and other people: Treating people with dignity/respect. Using people's proper names; courtesy and good manners. Children discuss jeering and teasing (p.9).
- ◆ My friends and other people: Identifying qualities and skills associated with friendship. Discuss Phoebe's definition, pp.55–56.
- ◆ Media education: Distinguishing between fact and fiction in different media forms. Exploring the content of various programmes and ads. Discuss the offer made to Laurence on p.70 and his refusal to become a media leprechaun on p.74.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- ◆ Warm-up: Stretching exercises (p.8).
- ◆ Dancing at the crossroads: Simple Irish dance steps to appropriate music.

VISUAL ARTS

- ◆ Leprechaun buns: Make fairy cakes; when cooked, place three yellow Smarties on each bun (gold!) and cover with green icing.
- ◆ Laughing leprechaun: *Everything Irish*, p.48.