

LAZY TOM

A Tale from Ireland

There once was a man named Tom O'Shanahan. He lived with his father who worked the land on a small farm in Ireland. Tom was lazy. Everyone knew this, including Tom. In fact, he often laughed about being so lazy.

One day, instead of helping his father with the chores, Tom strolled off into the country to enjoy the beautiful day. As he walked, Tom heard a strange noise. It was a hammering kind of sound. Tom became curious, so he quietly crept over to the spot where it was coming from. Slowly, slowly he inched forward until he saw the source of the hammering.

There in the bushes Tom saw a leprechaun making himself a small pair of shoes. What luck, thought Tom. If he was quick enough to capture the leprechaun he could become rich. Tom kept his eyes on the leprechaun, because if he looked away, he could lose sight of him. Fortunately for Tom, the

leprechaun was so involved in his task that he did not hear Tom approach, until it was too late.

Tom grabbed ahold of the leprechaun and would not let go. As hard as he tried, the leprechaun could not break free from Tom's grasp. Admitting defeat, the leprechaun asked Tom what he wanted. Tom asked the little fellow to show him where he hid his pot of gold. The leprechaun agreed and took Tom to an expansive meadow filled with beautiful yellow flowers.

The leprechaun took Tom deep into the meadow. At last he stopped and told Tom that if he wanted the gold he would have to dig for it, as it was buried beneath the yellow flower right in front of them. Tom became frustrated for he had nothing to dig with. He decided to go get a shovel and come back. So, Tom tied his green scarf around the yellow flower that grew above the leprechaun's pot of gold. Knowing that leprechauns were tricky, Tom asked the little man to do him a favor and leave the green scarf exactly where it was tied. The leprechaun agreed.

Tom went home to find a shovel. It took him a long time because he didn't know where to find one. After all, he was a lazy man who had never used a shovel before. But, eventual-

ly he did find a shovel, which he took back to the meadow. He was so excited at the prospect of becoming rich. However, when Tom reached the meadow he was taken by surprise.

The leprechaun kept his word and left Tom's green scarf tied to the flower growing above his pot of gold. But, the leprechaun tied more green scarves to all the rest of the pretty yellow flowers in the meadow. There was no way that Tom would be able to find the pot of gold without digging up the entire meadow. There was no way that lazy Tom would do that much work. So, Lazy Tom sighed and went back home. He remained as lazy as ever and the clever leprechaun kept his pot of gold.

Adapted by Kathleen Simonetta. Inspired by the following tale:

“Lazy Tom” found in The Lion Storyteller Bedtime Book. Retold by Bob Hartman, illustrations by Krisztina Kallai Nagy, Oxford: Lion Hudson ple, c2009, pp85-87.

