



Leprechauns are the most well-known elves (fairies) of Ireland. They live in the large green hills and in the forests of County Antrim. A leprechaun is an ugly little creature with pointed ears. He is about 40 centimetres tall. He likes being alone and avoids contact with humans or any other leprechauns or fairies. His job is to make shoes for the other fairies. Because they are a kind of fairy, leprechauns are often invisible. When they are not invisible, you can recognise a leprechaun because he has a shoe in one hand and a hammer in the other. He also likes to smoke a pipe of tobacco which smells horrible!

Leprechauns are naughty, they like to cause mischief. They like to hide in trees and although they are small, they can usually move very fast and are nearly impossible for a human to catch!

They usually dress in grey or green coloured coats, red trousers, leather apron and a red or green wide hat. They carry two leather bags, in one he carries a silver shilling and in the other, a gold coin to buy his way out of a difficult situation.

They like to drink a very strong Irish drink called poteen and can be found in an intoxicated state a lot of the time. Leprechauns like to 'adopt' families and move in with them. When a Leprechaun has moved in your house the first sign is that things start to disappear, or appear again in unexpected places.

Furniture may be moved around the room, and the whiskey or milk will be found to have gone down overnight, and then to have been replaced with water (especially the whiskey!). If all this begins to happen, the family involved will know they must start leaving out presents of food and drink to keep the cheeky little fairy happy. Then, the leprechaun will go round the house at night finishing the jobs that the people have no time to do.

Leprechauns guard the fairies' treasures as they must prevent humans from stealing it. They hide the treasures in a 4-leaf shamrock garden called Lucky Charm garden. According to myth, Leprechauns hate the rainbow, because it will show where the gold is hidden. As the saying goes "A pot of gold can be found at the end of a rainbow" and when a rainbow appears this causes the leprechauns great anxiety. Even if he moves his pot of gold quickly, he can never escape from rainbows. Since it rains a lot in Ireland, there are a lot of rainbows!

If a human ever catches a leprechaun (which is very difficult) and demands his treasure, he will give it to the human if the human sets him free. If you can ever catch a Leprechaun, he'll tell you where his pot of gold is hidden if you let him go, but he'd prefer to give you three magical wishes if you'll leave his gold alone. Choose your wishes carefully as he will try to trick you!

Questions

- 1) Why is it difficult to meet a leprechaun?
- 2) What do leprechauns look like?
- 3) What is the leprechaun's job?
- 4) What clothes do leprechauns wear?
- 5) What is the first sign that a leprechaun has adopted a family?
- 6) Prove that Leprechauns like playing tricks on human.
- 7) If the family give him food and drink, what will he do to help them?
- 8) Where does the leprechaun hide the fairies' treasures?
- 9) What can be found at the end of the rainbow?
- 10) Do leprechauns like rainbows?
- 11) If a human catches a leprechaun, what will he give the human in exchange for his freedom?
- 12) Why must you be careful what you wish for if a leprechaun gives you three wishes?

