

To catch a Leprechaun

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES



Having an imagination is the greatest gift ever bestowed upon mankind. It allows you to escape those turbulent evils of daily living...boredom and apathy...and create for yourself a mysterious wonderland of never was and never has been.

You might, in the daytime, pick cotton in the hot fields of Alabama but that very same night you can sit on the throne of England. You can be mired in the paralysis of city ghetto but with one tiny push of the imagination you can soar to freedom.

When I was a tiny child I would squat down in the field behind my grandmother's house and (if extremely quiet) I would see the elf asleep beneath the petals of the buttercup. My little playmates would squat with me...their imaginations dormant and undeveloped...and they never once saw the elf.

"There ain't no elf under that buttercup."

"Yes there is."

"We're going to tell your mother you been lying."

The children would run to my mother,

shouting my sinful behavior, and my mother would say to them..."Yes...the elf is there....I've seen him with my own eyes."

Since that early childhood I have nurtured my imagination. Developed it. Expanded it. I have kept it as a shield when reality makes me weary. I have lived the lives of a thousand people and visited a million places. I have soared like a bird...climbed a mountain of jellybeans...and danced with Marie Antoinette.

I have been a guest in a harem that contained six hundred girls and in the morning those girls carried me around on their shoulders shouting praise for my stamina.

I have been a fly that has just escaped the frog's darting tongue and I have been a candle shining brilliantly on a poor child's birthday cake. I have been a wine taster in France and worked as a toy maker for Santa Claus.

I have taken all the pretty girls and kissed them on the lips.

I have waded from a sandy beach in California and rode a dolphin to Hawaii. I have sipped wine with Cardinal

Richelieu and fought the Barbary Pirates with Stephen Decatur. I have walked down a dusty road in Jerusalem and held the hand of Jesus Christ.

I have been a puppy held in the arms of adoring master. I have been a male peacock strutting in manly arrogance before my lady fair. And once...not too long ago...I saved Holland by thrusting my finger into leaking dike.

I have been a mother who has just lost her child and an orphan that nobody wants. I have been a magnificent stag blasted into eternity by a hunter's sporting instinct. I have been an ornament on a Christmas tree and a turkey sandwich in a hungry child's lunch bag.

I have journeyed with fellow crusaders in search of the Holy Grail and I have toppled into a huge vat of chocolate ice cream. I have discovered a cure for cancer and flown on the back of a goose from Canada to Texas.

I have answered a knock at my door and found a basket of deserted kittens. I have gone over Niagra Falls in a barrel and been elected President of the United States. I have sung at the

Metropolitan Opera and danced with Irene Castle.

I have received the Congressional Medal of Honor six times and (without one single nail) built the Mormon Tabernacle. I have been a sparrow searching for food and a lonely man searching for love. I have attended my own funeral and cried with great anguish at my passing.

I have been chained in the bowels of a slaveship and been helplessly lost in an Alaskan blizzard.

I have been a blueberry muffin held in the hands of a little girl and I have ridden a shooting star to unknown planets. I have assassinated the maker of Castor Oil and bludgeoned to death the creator of pantyhose.

My life has been so much richer because of the fantasies conjured up by the power of my imagination. And I pray that you readers haven't lost this ability to dream.

For it will make life so much sweeter if you can ever manage to catch a star.

Or if you can (just once in your lifetime) see the elf beneath the buttercup.
