

**Movie:** Leprechaun (1993)

### **Synopsis**

On January 10, 1983, Daniel O'Grady returned home from a trip to Ireland and told his wife that he had captured a Leprechaun and that by doing so, acquired his pot of gold. Mrs. O'Grady is mysteriously killed, and Dan is institutionalized upon after discovering the body of his dead wife.

*Leprechaun* is a 1993 horror comedy that details the exploits of Tory Redding and her friends 10 years later, when her father moves them into the O'Grady farmhouse. Tory must battle the curse of the leprechaun by enlisting the help of Nathan Murphy, his little brother Alex, and their friend Ozzie Jones.

### **How it relates to the field of psychiatry**

While the name "leprechaun" is derived from the Irish *leath bhrogan* (shoemaker), origins of the folkloric cobbler lie with the fae (fairy). From the lineage of supernatural creatures that includes elves, gnomes and trolls (Table 1); leprechauns are guardians of treasures buried during war-time. They hide their gold in secret locations which can only be revealed if a person, such as Daniel O'Grady, is fortunate enough to capture one of the folkloric creatures.

The film opens with the eerie fairy prophesying, "Try as they will, and try as they might, who steals me gold won't live through the night." Capturing the leprechaun's pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is both literally and figuratively a Sisyphean task. In the literal sense, rainbows result from the dispersion of light through individual droplets of water that act as tiny prisms. The droplets disperse the light and reflect it back to the viewer's eye. An observer on the ground sees a half-circle of color. However, when viewed from above the ground, the rainbow is actually discovered to be a complete circle, making the discovery of a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow a physical impossibility.

Finding gold at the end of the rainbow is therefore parallel to achieving self-actualization in a Maslowian pyramid; something we continually strive for, but never fully achieve. The character of Daniel O'Grady, as well as all those who follow in taking the leprechaun's gold, is then the embodiment of hubris. Driven by pride and greed, the characters in *Leprechaun* will bear its curse.

Similar to the Norse mythological creatures of dwarves and trolls (faes), another Norse hero's tale is also shrouded in greed for gold. In *Beowulf* (2007), King Hrothgar's mead hall, Heorot, is under siege by the legendary Grendel. The reason for the monster's assault is the king's possession of a golden horn, a symbol of pride and lust (before committing suicide, Hrothgar tells Beowulf that he was seduced by the water demon and that Grendel was the progeny of their tryst).

The 1993's film's eponymous character also demonstrates disregard for and violation of other's rights; the hallmark of Antisocial Personality Disorder. His character is a reincarnate of Count Dracula, who violates Jonathon Harker's rights when he imprisons the wayward lawyer in his castle. Beyond Tory's complaining that the farmhouse's previous owner was Dracula, the leprechaun parallels the vampire in that it is considered soulless (traded his soul for the gold), and withdraws from a four-leaf clover much like a vampire reacts to a crucifix.

"I'll not rest till I have me gold. Curse this well that me soul shall dwell, till I find me magic that breaks me spell."

**Key Words:** Leprechaun, leath bhrogan, fae, fairy, elf, gnome, troll, Sisyphean task, self-actualization, Maslow, Beowulf, King Hrothgar, Heorot, Grendel, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Count Dracula, Jonathon Harker.

Fae (Fairy)	Culture	Similar Creatures	Mythology
Asrai	Brythonic	Mermaids, sirens	If an Asrai is seen by a man, her beauty is so great that, according to folklore, the man will instantly wish to capture her.
Banshee	Irish	bean shith	A female spirit seen as an omen of death.
Bogles	Scottish	Boggart, bogeyman, bogie, hobgoblin, bodach	From the family of <i>ballybogs</i> , bogles are reputed to live for the simple purpose of torturing young children who disobey their mothers. Their counterparts, hobgoblins, are described as friendly or amusing.
Brownies	Celtic	<i>Ūruisg</i> , gnomes	Inhabit houses and aid in tasks around the house. When irritated through neglect or disrespectful treatment he would not hesitate to become wantonly mischievous.
Dwarves	Norse		Dwarves are magical creatures with huge skill at metallurgy, users of charms, curses, and deceit.
Dryads,	Greek	Meliai, Hamadryad, and Daphnaie	Nymphs of oak trees.
Elves	Germanic		A race of minor nature and fertility gods.
Fir Darrig	Irish	Fear Deang, leprechaun	A solitary faerie who "busies himself with practical joking, especially with gruesome joking."
Gnomes			Benevolent, deformed (usually with a hunchback) beings who were led by their king, Gob, who ruled with a magic sword.
Goblins		Celtic brownie	Grotesquely disfigured evil creatures with various abilities.

Gwyllion	Welsh	Ghosts, spirits	Non-corporeal undead malevolent creatures
Knockers	Cornish	Bucca, Puck, Púca, and Pwca	Bucca seems to be the subject of food offerings placed on the beach (often fish) or in the spilling of ale and bread crumbs and also seems to be associated with the wind ("Bucca calling").
Leprechauns	Irish		They are said to be very rich, having many treasure crocks buried during war-time. They hide their gold in secret locations, which can only be revealed if a person were to actually capture and interrogate a leprechaun for its money. By nature, leprechauns are said to be mischievous; with many tales present the leprechaun as outwitting a human.
Mermaids and Mermen		Sirens	Legendary aquatic creatures with the head and torso of human female and the tail of a fish.
Pixies	Celtic		Pixies are winged human-like creatures that are said to disguise themselves as a bundle of rags to lure children into their play. They may be fond of music and dancing, and are helpful to needy widows and others with housework.
Redcaps	British	Powrie, dunter, goblin, elf	Redcaps are murderous fairies that get their name from killing travelers who stray into their homes and dye their hats with their victims' blood (if the blood staining their hats dries out, they die). The only way to escape one is to quote a passage from the Bible; they lose a tooth on hearing it, which they leave behind.
Sidhees	Irish	Shees, elves, daoine sídhe ("deena shee"), and daoine síth or daoine sídh	Sidhees are ancestors of the gods and goddesses, and are believed to live underground in the fairy mounds.
Sluaghs	Irish and Scottish		Spirits of the restless dead; the souls of evil people who were welcome in neither heaven nor hell. They were seen to fly in groups like flocks of birds, coming from the west, and were known to try to enter the house of a dying person in an effort to carry the soul away with them (west-facing windows were sometimes kept closed to keep them out).
Spriggans			The ghosts of the old giants, Spriggans are hideous creatures that stole children, leaving their ugly changelings in their place.
Trolls	Norse	Trows, <i>jötmar</i> , giants	Trolls dwell in isolated mountains, rocks, and caves, sometimes live together, and are rarely described as helpful or friendly.
Muses	Greek		Daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (goddess of memory), the muses are the goddesses of the inspiration of literature, science and the arts.

## **References**

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