



Magic Tales

A Pot of Gold



Patrick lived with his mother and a cow, and some hens, in a tiny cottage in the middle of Ireland. They were poor, but they were happy.



Every morning, as she blew on the peat fire to make it hot enough to cook their breakfast porridge, Patrick's mother would call, "Wake up and get up, you lazy boy! You will never catch a leprechaun with your eyes closed."

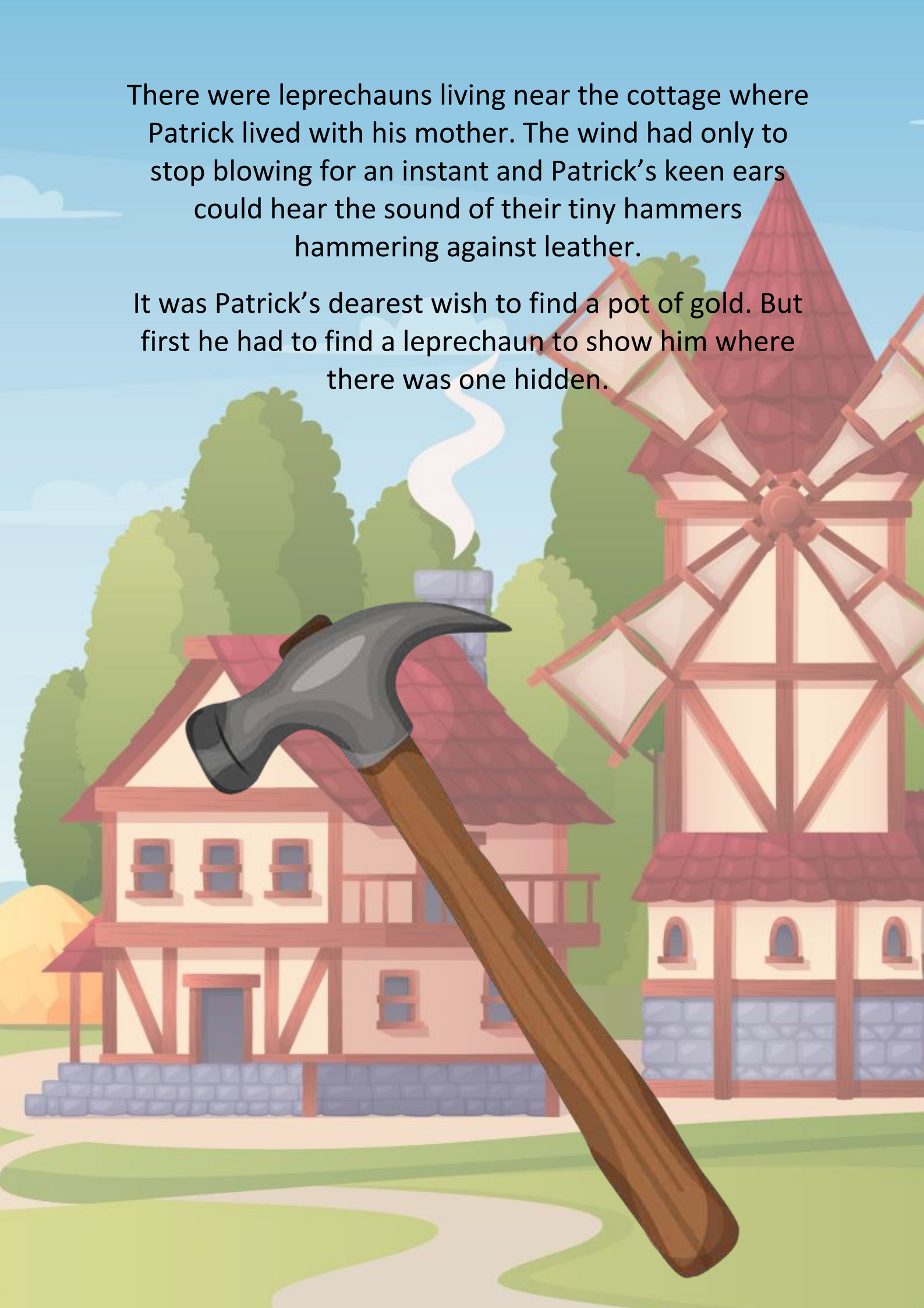


Leprechauns are fairy shoemakers. They live in holes in the ground and between the roots of trees. They are said to be very rich and wherever there is a leprechaun, there is sure to be a pot of gold hidden somewhere close by.



There were leprechauns living near the cottage where Patrick lived with his mother. The wind had only to stop blowing for an instant and Patrick's keen ears could hear the sound of their tiny hammers hammering against leather.

It was Patrick's dearest wish to find a pot of gold. But first he had to find a leprechaun to show him where there was one hidden.

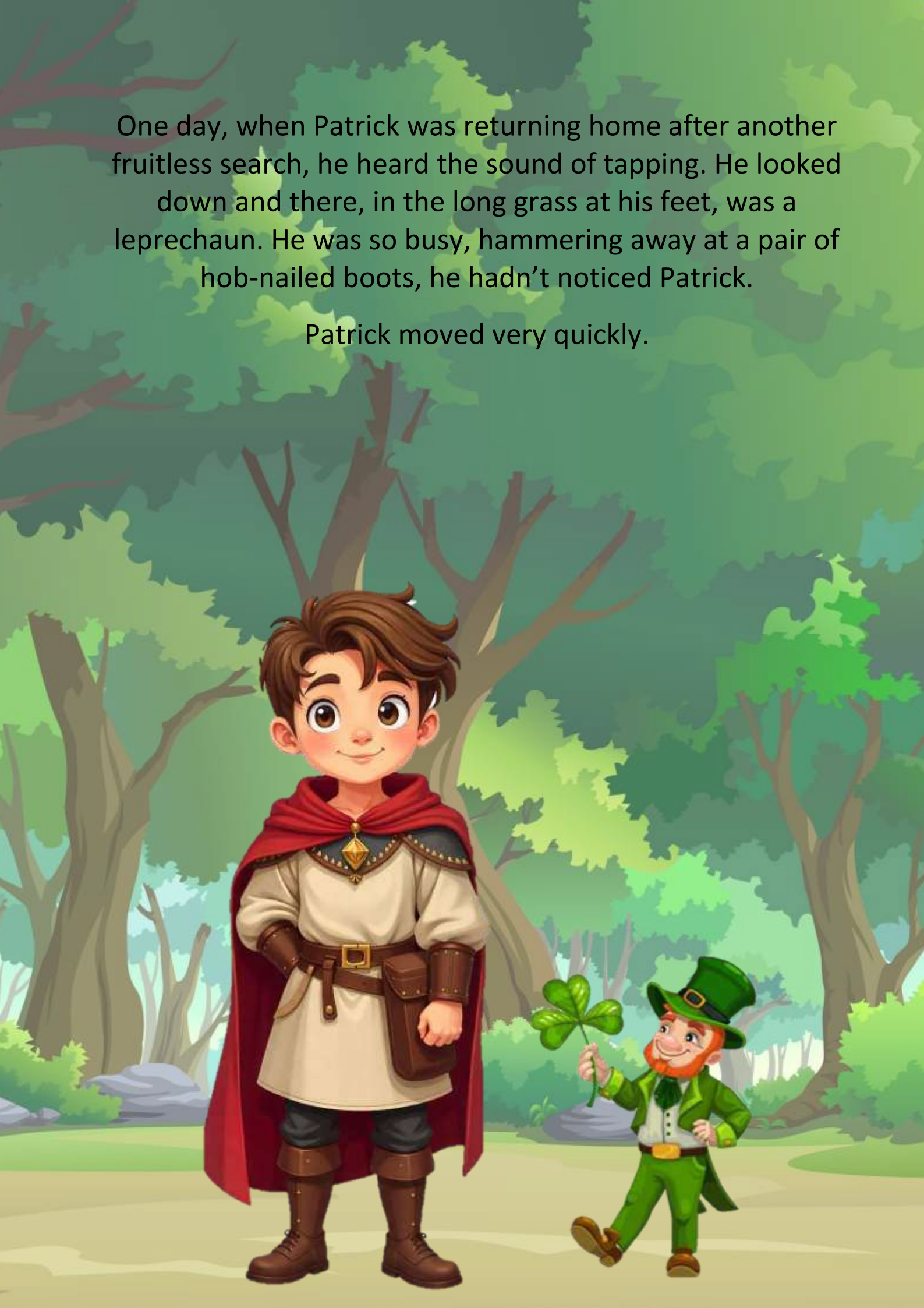


“If you happen to see a leprechaun,” said Patrick’s mother, at least once every day, “Do not take your eyes off him for a moment. If you do, he will disappear and then you will never find a pot of gold.”



One day, when Patrick was returning home after another fruitless search, he heard the sound of tapping. He looked down and there, in the long grass at his feet, was a leprechaun. He was so busy, hammering away at a pair of hob-nailed boots, he hadn't noticed Patrick.

Patrick moved very quickly.



“Got you!” he cried as he caught the leprechaun in his hand.

“Let me go! Let me go!” shouted the leprechaun, struggling to get free.

“Tell me where your gold is hidden first!”

“G.g.gold...” The leprechaun turned very pale.

“Yes... tell me... or I will not let you go... not EVER!”



“Quick! Look behind you! There’s a cow in the corn!” cried the leprechaun.

Just in time, Patrick remembered NOT to look.

“Ha... ha... you won’t catch me that way. I won’t take my eyes off you. Now where is your pot of gold?”

“I haven’t got a pot of gold,” cried the leprechaun.

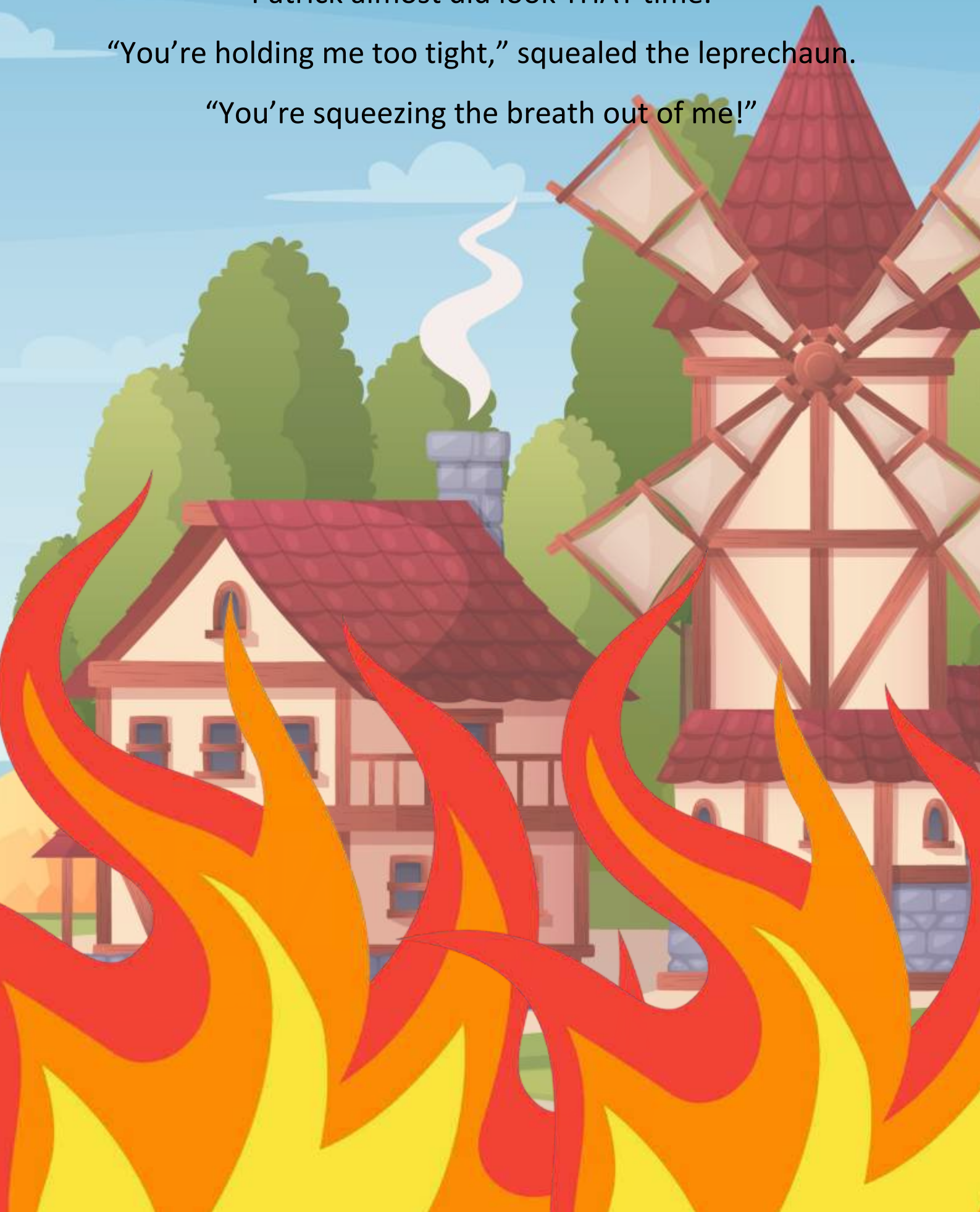


“Quick! Look behind you! Your house is burning!”

Patrick almost did look THAT time.

“You’re holding me too tight,” squealed the leprechaun.

“You’re squeezing the breath out of me!”



“It’s no good trying to trick me,” said Patrick. “I’m not letting you go until you tell me where your gold is hidden.”

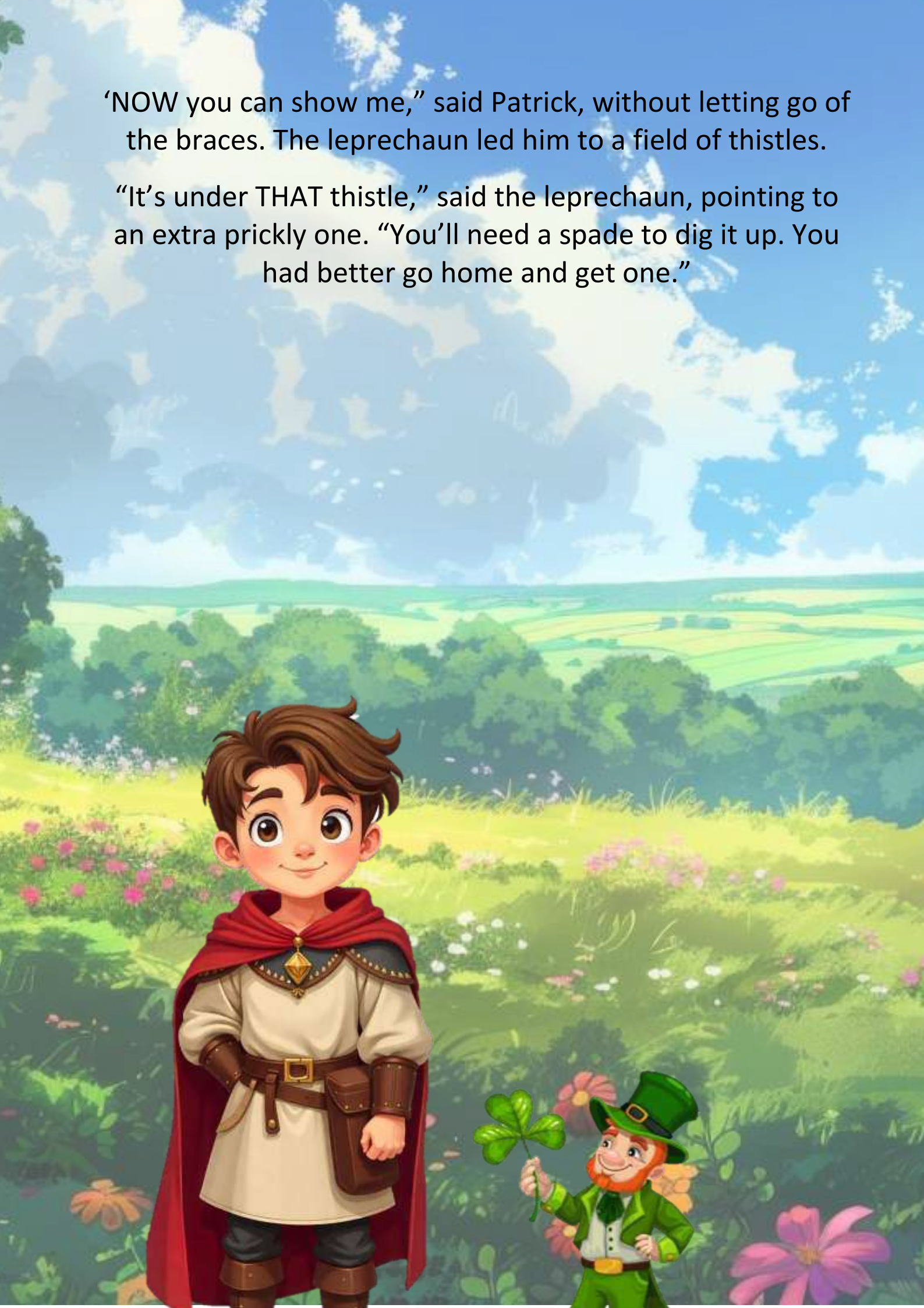
“I’ll show you where it is,” said the leprechaun.

Patrick took off his braces, tied them round the leprechaun’s waist and put him on the ground.



‘NOW you can show me,’ said Patrick, without letting go of the braces. The leprechaun led him to a field of thistles.

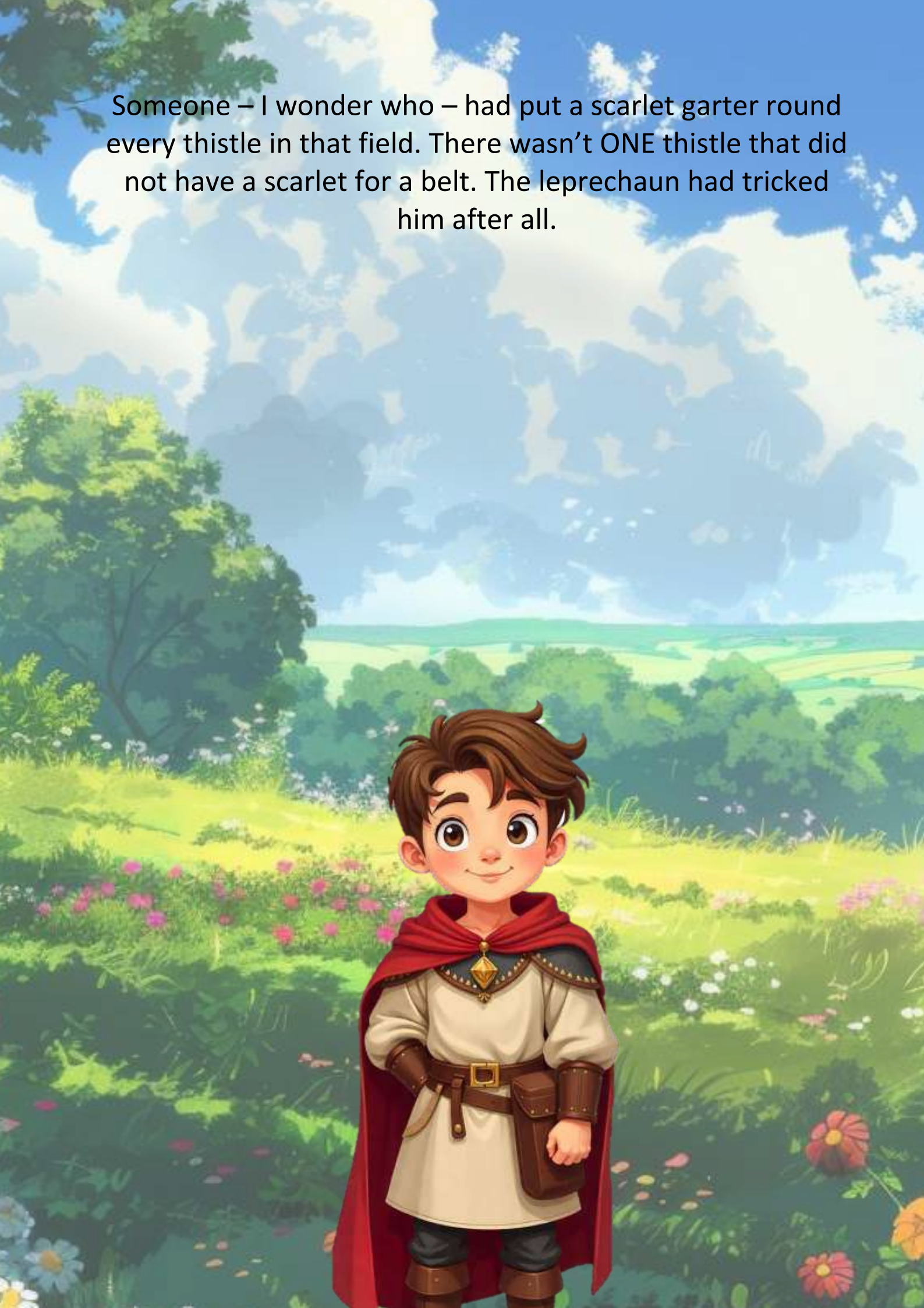
“It’s under THAT thistle,” said the leprechaun, pointing to an extra prickly one. “You’ll need a spade to dig it up. You had better go home and get one.”



Patrick ran home, got a spade and ran all the way back. But when he reached the field, instead of digging, he sat down and howled. He cried and he sobbed. He held his head in his hands. Tears as big as raindrops rolled down his cheeks.



Someone – I wonder who – had put a scarlet garter round every thistle in that field. There wasn't ONE thistle that did not have a scarlet for a belt. The leprechaun had tricked him after all.



His mother had told him not to take his eyes off the leprechaun, hadn't she, and when Patrick put the leprechaun in his pocket, that is exactly what he had done. He never saw another leprechaun and so he never found a pot of gold. His mother said, it was entirely his own fault.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY