

The Goopy Ghost at St. Patrick's Day

V. R. Duin

Bonnie Lemaire, Illustrator

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St. Patrick's Day doesn't get many books devoted to it. Having celebrated Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day in previous books, V. R. Duin's lovable Goopy Ghost turns his eye to the March holiday in *The Goopy Ghost at St. Patrick's Day*.

In this tale, the Goopy Ghost finds a leprechaun locked in a cage and in need of rescue. Goopy releases the leprechaun and helps him retrieve his gold from the robbers who stole it. In return, Goopy is granted three wishes.

Duin has been very active as a writer of children's literature over the past few years, publishing seven books since 2009, including four other volumes about the Goopy Ghost. For *The Goopy Ghost at St. Patrick's Day*, she once again teams up with Bonnie Lemaire, who has provided the illustrations for all of Duin's books. This partnership proves successful once again; writer and artist combine St. Patrick's Day traditions like shamrocks and leprechauns with the wild-card element of the Goopy Ghost to create a novel adventure.

The book has some minor flaws that distract a bit: One of the pre-story title pages shows the Goopy Ghost hiding behind some pumpkins (something not typically associated with St. Patrick's Day), and a few pages feel like the art is uncomfortably constrained by the page size. The text is delivered in rhyme—limerick style, appropriately enough—and while most of the verses are well done, some are awkwardly altered to fit the rhyme scheme, as in the last line of this stanza: "The leprechaun showed great surprise / And rubbed at his startled green eyes. / These thieves just cause harm. / Why come to his farm? / In three wishes, wise answer lies."

Additionally, the line doesn't quite mesh with the story, since the robbers took the gold and left behind the leprechaun, so getting three wishes wouldn't seem to have been their goal. In the section that follows, Goopy makes his three wishes and grants the recanting robbers guard work at a decent wage. But there is no further explanation of why the robbers came to the farm, and they themselves never voice a lack of work as the reason for their thievery.

Still, most children will skip right past any confusing parts, swept along by the rhythm of the limericks and the story itself. Taken as a whole, *The Goopy Ghost at St. Patrick's Day* is another worthwhile addition to V.R. Duin's ever-growing bundle of offerings.

PETER DABBENE (December 19, 2012)

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