

LUCKY CLOVER

Barbara A. Barnett

“Oh, for the love of...” Seamus shifted from foot to foot, one pudgy hand fingering the four-leaf clover in his shirt pocket. The thought of using it sent his heart fluttering, but his fellow leprechauns were being cut down all around him by a swarm of chittering fairies.

“Aieeeee!” the fiends cried as they flitted through the air, slashing with their sword-like wands.

“You’re going to have to use it,” Seamus muttered to himself.

The oldest leprechaun families possessed magic heirlooms – some more powerful than others. Growing up, Seamus had watched with jealousy as his friends inherited swords and rings and amulets that imbued them with great power when wielded. But like his father before him, Seamus kept his inheritance out of sight. He knew what the other leprechauns would say of the clover.

“Aieeeee!” the fairies cried again.

Scores of leprechauns fell to their knees, blood trickling from their ears. They dropped their swords and their rings and their amulets, no more than useless tokens now. The fairies had spent years tracing those leprechaun heirlooms, weaving spells to protect themselves against every one they discovered. And now that they had found them all, they were invading.

Seamus sighed. *All except mine.* He reached into his pocket and pulled out the drooping four-leaf

clover. The humans sought the dreaded things for luck, but humans were incredibly dense. Among the leprechauns, Seamus and his family were freaks, keepers of something that went against the natural order of three leaves for the three races: leprechauns, fairies, and the oh-so-stupid humans.

Seamus trudged toward the battlefield, four-leaf clover held aloft. Three fairies descended on him. A tingle spread from the clover to Seamus’s hand, then down his arm and throughout his body as the clover worked its spell of bad luck. One fairy smacked into another, then another. The fairies twisted through the air, cutting each other to shreds with their own wands.

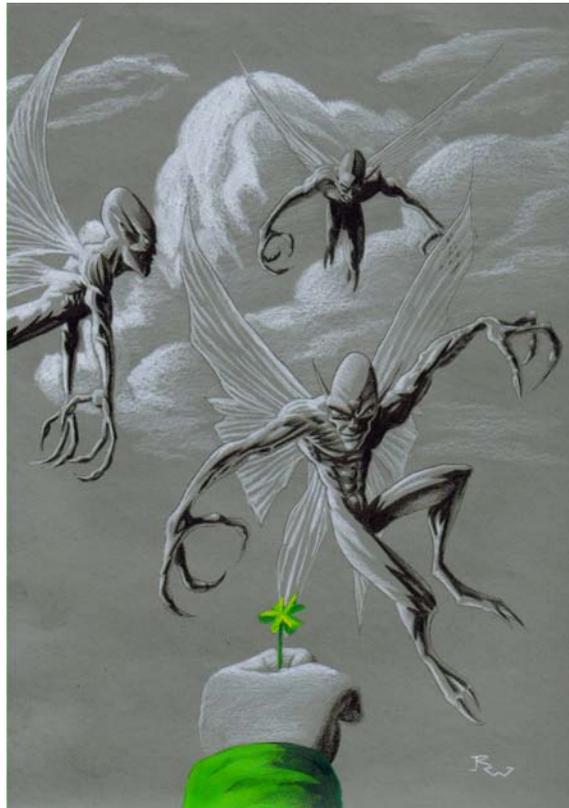
I’ll be laughed out of the village, Seamus thought. Blood trickled onto the grass around him as if it were rain. *I’ll become one of those outcasts who torture the humans by telling them about pots of gold buried at the ends of rainbows.*

As Seamus stood there, head hung in mortification and

the tingle in his arm fading, the fairies’ piercing battle wails turned into screams of terror. By the time they gave their cry of retreat, Seamus was surrounded by a pile of dead fairies.

A pile so big, he realized, that it hid him and his clover from the view of his compatriots.

Seamus smiled, then sighed in relief as he pocketed the four-leaf clover. *Maybe,* he thought, *the humans aren’t so dumb after all.*



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Barbara A. Barnett is a graduate of the 2007 Odyssey Writing Workshop, where she learned valuable things about writing and the evil ways of chickens. Her

fiction ranges from the dark to the wacky and has recently appeared in markets such as *Fictitious Force*, *Aoife's Kiss*, and *Darker Matter*. Despite the “Would you like fries with that?” jokes made about her employment prospects during college, she has put her dual degree in English and music to practical use working in the arts administration field. In the real world, she lives with her husband in southern New Jersey. Online, you can find her at babarnett.com.