



# *Gold in the Garden*

Isabella Swenson

Humor, Magic

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Mrs. Vincent looked out the window one Autumn day and said decidedly that she would go and clear out the garden for the winter, seeing as it was finally not raining out.

“That’s nice, Ma,” said her daughter Carrie, who couldn’t have cared less. SHE had to do sums, and what was gardening compared to arithmetic?

Mrs. Vincent pulled on her gardening gloves, took a spade, and went to the garden, which was very grey and bleary, now that almost everything, save a few Autumn bulbs, was dead. Well, the woman decided, she would start at one end of the garden and work her way to the other.

It was nearly eleven o’clock, and Mrs. Vincent was about halfway through her task. She had been wrestling with a dead zucchini plant when her shovel hit something hard. Thinking it was only a rock, Mrs. Vincent simply dug around it. There, now there was a clear circle around the dead plant, and with several forceful tugs, the plant pulled from the ground, and Mrs. Vincent went and discarded it to her compost heap.

She returned to the spot where the zucchini plant had once resided and bent down to retrieve her spade when a bright flash caught her eye. She studied the dirt, and then gasped when she saw what it was that was reflecting against the weak Autumn sun.

Carrie had been on number three out of twenty sums when her mother rushed into the kitchen, and said breathlessly, “look what I just found in the garden!” Carrie looked up and gasped. She set down her pencil, and

rushed outside, hoping to find more of this marvelous metal. After all, what was sums to GOLD?

Search did not reveal anything that day, but wasn't even one little bar of gold enough? Maybe for Mrs. Vincent it was, but not for Carrie! The next morning, she grimly set out, spade in hand, intent on digging up more gold. All morning she dug, and she wouldn't have come in for dinner if Mrs. Vincent hadn't insisted on it. How could Mother carry on so placidly when there was GOLD to be found out in the garden? After dinner, Carrie was sent to her room to finish her forgotten arithmetic, and Mrs. Vincent went out to the garden. She was curious. How had there come to be a single bar of gold in the garden, and was there more?

Twenty minutes of digging around in the dead garden proved that there was. Mrs. Vincent found another bar of gold, precisely the same size as the one of the day before. She looked around the garden, amazed. She had kept this garden for nineteen years, since her marriage, and never had she found precious metals of any variety. Well, she would use what she had, and pay the mortgage on the farm. There! She came home from the banker's that day, feeling happy and satisfied with life.

Next day, even more prowling about in the garden revealed ANOTHER bar of gold, as did it the day after that! Real, legitimate gold! On the fifth day of this marvelous adventure (fancy not having to leave home to have them!), Mrs. Vincent was breaking up the dirt in the area that had once contained a tomato plant when she heard a voice.

"Good day."

She looked around, and after a moment, decided that she hadn't really heard anything, and if she HAD, it had been the hired men talking down by the stable. Though why their voices carried so far she didn't know... Mrs. Vincent kept digging.

"When some one greets you, you know, it is nice to say hello to THEM, too!" The same, rather high-pitched, accented, but definitely masculine voice spoke again. Mrs. Vincent knew that she WAS hearing something now, and set down her shovel. "Who is that?" She asked.

"Oh, come on! You really don't see me?"

Mrs. Vincent tried to follow the sound of the voice, but unless it was that tree over there talking, then she

hadn't a clue of who the voice belonged to. "I- I'm sorry..." she faltered.

"Look under this big ol' tree."

Mrs. Vincent looked accordingly, and was surprised to see a little man (only about two and a half feet tall) wearing a brown shirt and boots, green pants, and a little green hat with a red feather stuck in it. The man had a red beard, and small, pinched, twinkling eyes.

"See me now?" He asked.

"Yes..." Mrs. Vincent swallowed. "What- Who are you?"

"I'm a leprechaun, lady! The one who's been leaving you all of the gold!"

"Oh!" said the woman vaguely. "Well, that is very kind of you... why, exactly?"

"It's kind of my job," the leprechaun explained. "See, every ten years I go and find a new person to leave my gold with. I dunno, you guys just looked like you could use it."

"Yes, we do. But how come only a bar a day?"

The leprechaun eyed Mrs. Vincent wearily. "Lady how much gold can YOU make by yourself on a daily basis?"

"Not a speck."

"Well then, don't go looking down at me, like YOU could do better," snorted the short little man.

"I am sorry, I wasn't trying to be impolite. Um, well... thank you?"

"Yup. And just one little thing before I go, 'kay, lady?" YOU are the only one who can find the gold, just you. Not your husband or your little girl or your dog, see?"

"I don't have a dog-" Mrs. Vincent started to say.

- "Doesn't matter!" roared the leprechaun. "Just YOU keep collecting it, you get ten years, 'kay? Buh- bye now." And he left.

And so, over the next ten years, Mrs. Vincent collected her gold, and became so rich that by the time her ten years were up, she and Carrie were dressed in silks and furs, they could sell their dingy little farm, have a coach-man to drive them places and Mr. Vincent could ride with them, and a hired girl did all of the cooking for Mrs. Vincent. And they lived pretty happily ever after.

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