



## THE LUCKY SUIT

VirJean Potter Bozarth

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Tangor's Mom gives us a tale which embraces the whimsical fantasy of Edgar Rice Burroughs' MINIDOKA, the fantasy and fantastic. This is a bedtime story similar to those Ed Burroughs might have told to Hulbert, John, and Joan in those years before he became a world famous author. VirJean Potter Bozarth's prose speaks to all the "littles" — the children of any generation — and is among several stories she has written for her grandbabies.



Once upon a time in a green valley surrounded by a forest of tall trees on the Emerald Isle of Ireland lived a very handsome, very young red-headed leprechaun by the name of Daryl O'Dandy. The Emerald Isle of Ireland, located just to the west of the Enchanted Isle of England, can be found on any map of the known world - if one looks hard enough.

Daryl O'Dandy was the son of Morgan and Megan O'Dandy. He was a handsome young Irish lad with clear green eyes inherited from his mother, and a wild shock of chestnut red hair inherited from his father. Daryl usually wore a big smile on that handsome Irish face of his but on this beautiful spring day that handsome face was marred by a frown. He was unhappy with his parents. His older brother Shawn had received a new Sunday suit--and Daryl had not.

Morgan O'Dandy saw the scowl on his youngest son's face. "Daryl," he apologized, "we can't get you a new Sunday suit right now." Then Morgan O'Dandy looked sternly at his belligerent young son's scowl in return.

"Why not?" demanded Daryl.

"Now, Daryl, be reasonable," his mother Megan O'Dandy began.

Daryl petulantly interrupted her. "I never get anything new!" he whined. Then he put his fists on his hips and shouted "It's just not fair!"

"'Tis true," said his mother quietly. "It's not really fair and it's a down-right shame we couldn't get you a new Sunday suit, too. I know how much you would like to have one." Daryl endured her

warm embrace. Mother straightened up and licked her fingers to tame his wild hair, but he moved out of her reach as she continued, "I'm sorry, my boyo, but you will just have to wear Shawn's old suit."

Now, if it be known, the reason Morgan and Megan O'Dandy could not get Daryl a new suit was that while they had two sons who both needed new Sunday suits, Morgan O'Dandy only had enough coins in his pot of gold hidden in the forest to buy one son a new Sunday suit. The older son had completely outgrown his old green velvet suit, so he was the one who had gotten the new suit. Father had spent the rest of his coins for new shoes and hats for both of the boys.

Daryl frowned as his mother fussed with the clothing about to be handed down. It brought a flush to his fair cheeks. It was bad enough he wouldn't be getting his own new Sunday suit, he thought, but the worst of it was that he would have to wear his brother Shawn's old green velvet suit every Sunday until he out-grew it. Shawn's old suit was in excellent condition, but to Daryl it was just another hand-me-down!

"Faith and begorrah, Daryl, me boy," said his father with some exasperation during the fitting. "I would buy you both a new Sunday suit if I had the money! Shawn's just gotten too big and too tall for his old green velvet suit. We had to get him something to wear. You'll wear Shawn's old suit on Sundays because that's the way it has to be. You'll grow into it in time," he explained patiently.

When Father had bought Daryl some new black shoes and a black hat with the lavender feathers he had hoped they might make Daryl forget about having to wear Shawn's old green velvet suit. One look at Daryl's belligerent face told Morgan O'Dan-

dy that the new shoes and hat would not make up to Daryl for him having to wear Shawn's old green velvet Sunday suit. Mother gently interceded.

"Laddie, you have grown at least two inches this last year," put in Megan O'Dandy trying to comfort the unhappy boy. "It will only be a wee bit big on you now. Come on, my Laddie," said Megan O'Dandy, a bit unsteady in her pregnancy. "Let's try it on and see just how much too big it is," she begged.

Megan held out the green velvet suit to Daryl. Then she said, "Look here, since Da and I couldn't get you a new suit, I did get this lovely lavender bow-tie and these purple suspenders for you. Da even got you a black hat with lavender feathers to go with your new black shoes. Please, laddie-buck, just try on Shawn's old shirt and suit for me."

"Oh, alright, but I'm not going to like it," muttered Daryl under his breath as he grabbed the old shirt and suit out of her hands.

He slipped the white shirt with the gathered sleeves over his head and jammed his skinny arms down those too-big sleeves. The sleeves of the shirt ballooned down over his slender hands when he buttoned the cuffs around his skinny wrists. The shirt collar gaped open around his slender neck. His mother used the new lavender bow-tie to gather the too-big shirt collar tight. Daryl felt like he was being strangled!

Then Daryl jerked on the too-long green velvet pants, jammed the white tails of the hand-me-down shirt into the hand-me-down pants and pulled the attached purple suspenders over his narrow shoulders, and they immediately fell down to his elbows!

When his mother saw the purple suspenders fall off his shoulders, she gave him a black belt with a gold buckle to hold his pants up.

"Here, Laddie, this belt should help hold up the pants," said his mother.

Daryl pulled the belt around his waist, buckled it tight and frowned back at his mother. When she handed him the green velvet jacket, he shoved his arms, swallowed up by those massive shirt sleeves, into the too-long sleeves of the too-big jacket. When he put his arms down, the cuffs on Shawn's old green velvet jacket hung down below Daryl's finger tips.

"It's just a wee bit big now, but it doesn't look too bad", said his mother with a gentle smile. "Here, try on your new shoes, Laddie. They will fit. They are just your size," she said as she handed them to him.

Daryl dropped down on his chair and pulled on the shiny black shoes. They did fit and they did look nice. He stood up and walked across the room to get the feel of them. His mother put his new black hat with the lavender feathers on his head.

"Oh, see how nice that looks," his mother said as she turned Daryl to face the free-standing floor-length mirror.

Daryl took one look in mirror and sighed. He had to admit that the new black shoes with the yellow gold buckles and the new black hat with the lavender feathers his father had gotten him really did look grand. In truth, however, wearing Shawn's old green velvet suit didn't make Daryl feel like a well-dressed O'Dandy at all. Instead, he scowled, the old green velvet suit and the lavender accessories made him feel like he was lost in a thistle

patch! Daryl worked up a ferocious frown of dismay at his reflection.

Daryl glanced at the splendidly dressed Shawn. His older brother certainly lived up to the O'Dandy name as he watched Shawn strut around the kitchen table in his brand new suit of sky blue velvet, his new striped burgundy and gold vest, his new white shirt with the flowing sleeves and his new navy blue bow-tie. When Shawn put on the new pair of navy blue leather shoes and added the new navy blue felt hat with the fluffy gold feathers to complete his new outfit, Daryl thought Shawn looked every inch an O'Dandy.

"It isn't fair at all," Daryl grumbled when he saw how dandy Shawn looked in his new clothes. Daryl compared his disreputable figure in the mirror with the smartly dressed figure of his brother and took off for his room to change his clothes.

"I hate hand-me-downs!" he muttered.

Daryl changed his mind about going to his room. He headed to his secret place in the forest to pout. Daryl didn't think it was fair that Shawn had gotten a whole brand new outfit while he had only gotten the new lavender bow-tie and those purple suspenders from his mother and the black felt hat with lavender feathers and shiny black shoes with the golden buckles from his father.



After a long search in a dozen different places, Shawn finally poked his red head into Daryl's secret place. "Oh, here you are, boyo," he said. "I've been looking everywhere for you."

Shawn sat beside Daryl and studied his forlorn face. He wanted to cheer up his little brother and to make those trembling lips smile again.

They sat together in a silence while Daryl was determined not to cry in front of his big brother. Shawn furiously thought of something to say to Daryl to make his little brother feel better. Shawn's mind was a blank. He just couldn't think of anything to say that he thought Daryl would want to hear. Then Shawn had an brilliant idea. He looked at his little brother and leaned close with a grin.

"You lucky dolt! I'm the one to be weeping, boyo! I'm so sorry I've grown *too big* and *too tall* to wear my green velvet '*lucky suit*' any longer," Shawn said.

Daryl frowned, then looked at his brother with surprise. "What do you mean '*lucky suit*?' I didn't know your suit was a 'lucky suit.'"

"Of course, it is," Shawn replied. "I never told anyone else that it was a 'lucky suit.' I have always kept that a secret. But, I can't wear it anymore. I grew too big. Oh, I wish I could still wear it! 'Tis envy I have you got my old green velvet suit. It really is a 'lucky suit.' It will change your life when you wear it. It changed mine when I wore it."

Daryl wasn't sure he believed his brother. He thought this might be Shawn's way to make him wear the old suit and not make a fuss about it. *Older brothers!*

Daryl turned a sideways glance to Shawn. "How did this 'lucky suit' change your life?"

"Well, I found my first gold nugget the first time I wore it," Shawn said.

"You're making that up," Daryl accused. He was sure that Shawn was just telling him this to get him

to wear that old green velvet suit. "You never told me about finding any gold nugget."

"Of course, I didn't. I kept it a secret from everybody," Shawn told Daryl. "A good leprechaun never tells anyone when or where he finds gold. I had coins made from those gold nuggets I found in a near-by creek bed. Then I bought a small pot for these coins and buried it like any good leprechaun does. I've found other nuggets since that first one and every time I found a gold nugget I was wearing that 'lucky suit'."

Daryl's eyes got big. "Please, Shawn," he begged, "let me see your pot of gold!"

A big arm went about those skinny shoulders. "You know that I can't do that," Shawn said emphatically. "Good leprechauns never tell a soul where they bury their pots of gold."

Shawn's arm gripped Daryl tightly as his voice became a whisper. "You must not tell anyone about the secret of the 'lucky suit.' There are brigands who might steal it away from you. If they get your suit, you might not be able to find any gold. Buck up, boyo!" Shawn rose, holding out his hand. "Let's go home. Our folks are worried about you."

As they left Daryl's secret hiding place to cross the rock-walled fields back home, Shawn laughingly yanked off his brother's new hat and scrubbed his hand over Daryl's red head. He hoped he had made his little brother feel better about the hand-me-down suit.

That Sunday evening the family joined their neighbors by the lake for a picnic supper and some folk dancing. Shawn, a big strapping lad, wore his new blue velvet outfit and he had the attention of all the young girls.



When Shawn O'Dandy glanced over at Daryl, he noticed his brother was having a real struggle with the too-large green velvet suit. Shawn begged off from the dancing and went over to his brother. He tucked the cuffs of the green velvet jacket sleeves to the inside and shortened the purple suspenders. He re-buckled the black belt with its gold buckle around Daryl's waist and then gathered the shirt around Daryl's neck with the lavender bow-tie.

Holding his brother at arms length Shawn declared: "Well, Daryl, me boy, I'm real proud to attend the picnic supper with such a good-looking, well-dressed little brother!" Bending down, his mouth to Daryl's ear, Shawn said, "Remember now, little brother, don't ye be telling a soul about the 'lucky suit'. I never told any one about because I was afraid it would lose its 'luck' if I did."

Daryl grinned. "Thanks, Shawn. I'll remember!"

After a while everyone had eaten their picnic suppers. The old people sat around gossiping and watching the older boys and girls dancing to the Irish jigs played by the musicians. Daryl watched Shawn dance with the girls. Then he grew bored, as all younger brothers do, and wandered down to the lake to toss pebbles in the moonlight.

Walking the shoreline Daryl wandered over to the rill that emptied into the lake from the north slope. He picked up several stones and skipped them over the water. Then, under the illumination of the August moon, he spotted a shiny reflection beneath the rippling water near the rocky shore. He looked closer.

Holding up the cuff of his right shirt sleeve to keep it dry, he leaned over and picked up a shiny gold nugget. Daryl's green velvet suit was indeed a *'lucky suit!'*

Daryl couldn't wait to tell Shawn he had found a gold nugget the first time he had worn Shawn's 'lucky suit'. "Now," Daryl grinned, "it's not Shawn's 'lucky suit' any more. *It's my 'lucky suit'!*" Then he laughed.

Daryl knew his 'lucky suit' would help him find enough gold nuggets to start his own pot of gold before he out-grew it, and he would have to pass that 'lucky suit' down to the baby in his mother's belly. Daryl was a happy young leprechaun, and knew he had a very special brother.

And knew he could not tell anyone!

Except maybe, a little brother!