



The New Policeman by Kate Thompson

Subjects: Time and space—Fiction; Fairies—Fiction; Music—Juvenile fiction

Awards: Best Books for Young Adults, Horn Book Fanfare

Book Lists: Europe, Gifted, Grade 6

Props: Socks



Have you ever wondered where your lost socks go? (*Show a couple of odd socks*) Or if there is a place of eternal youth? Or if fairies and leprechauns exist? 15-year-old JJ Liddy lives in Ireland, a place rich in stories and legends about such things. He has heard the stories but has never given them much thought. Certainly they are not to be believed. He is focused on school, sports, family, and music. He is amazing on the fiddle and can play the flute as well. But that's not really surprising; there have been musicians in his family for generations. His great grandfather once made a flute out of the spoke of a cartwheel. God's truth.

No, JJ doesn't have time to consider such silly stories, he has more important things to do—such as his mother's birthday wish. Everyone in Kinvara, Ireland, where JJ lives, is conscious that time is flying past, faster and faster. There never seems to be enough time to do what needs to be done. In fact, everyone is so stressed about the lack of time that when JJ asked his mother what she would like as a birthday present she asked for more time. At first JJ dismissed her request as mere wishful thinking, an impossibility. But then JJ tried to help his mom gain some time by running her errands for her and he learned something unexpected. His errands took him to a neighbor's house and she told him that she might have a way for him to find more time. She led him to an old ring fort said to have been made by fairies long ago. She found an entrance and took JJ underground. There she invited him to walk through the wall into Tir na n'Og, the land of eternal youth, the land of the fairies, and a depository of spare socks. (*Show odd socks*)

JJ does. He walks through the wall into Fairy land and sets out to buy his mother time. He immediately finds the fairy people and their land that parallels his own

land. He also discovers that they are having problems with time as well. They have too much. Along with extra socks, time is now leaking from JJ's world into their world. Suddenly everything is growing old. Time used to stand still, but lately, the sun in the sky has moved and shadows are forming where shadows should not be. They ask JJ for help. They want him to take back the extra time that has fallen from his world. JJ is happy to comply. But he has a problem. How can he gather time? In his search for an answer to that question, JJ must deal with self proclaimed gods, mutilated dogs, talking goats, and dreamy eyed fairies who would rather dance and play their music than solve their own time problem. Eventually JJ determines that he cannot gather time, but he can try to locate the leak between the two parallel worlds and find a way to fix it.

Meanwhile, back in Kinvara, Ireland, JJ's parents are frantic. They are unaware of his quest for more time. As far as they know, he has simply disappeared. He left on an errand one day and hasn't been seen since. The police are involved but they have no answers. Although there is one policeman who seems more interested than the others. He's the new policeman, Garda Larry O'Dwyer. Who is he, why has he come to JJ's town? Why does it seem so hard for him to remember, well something he seems to really want to remember. Who is he? He's someone of importance but his identity is hidden, guarded until the very last surprising moment.

Will the fairies regain eternal youth? Will JJ's world reclaim its lost time and socks? It's up to JJ, the New Policeman, and you to find out. (*Hold up book*) *The New Policeman* by Kate Thompson.